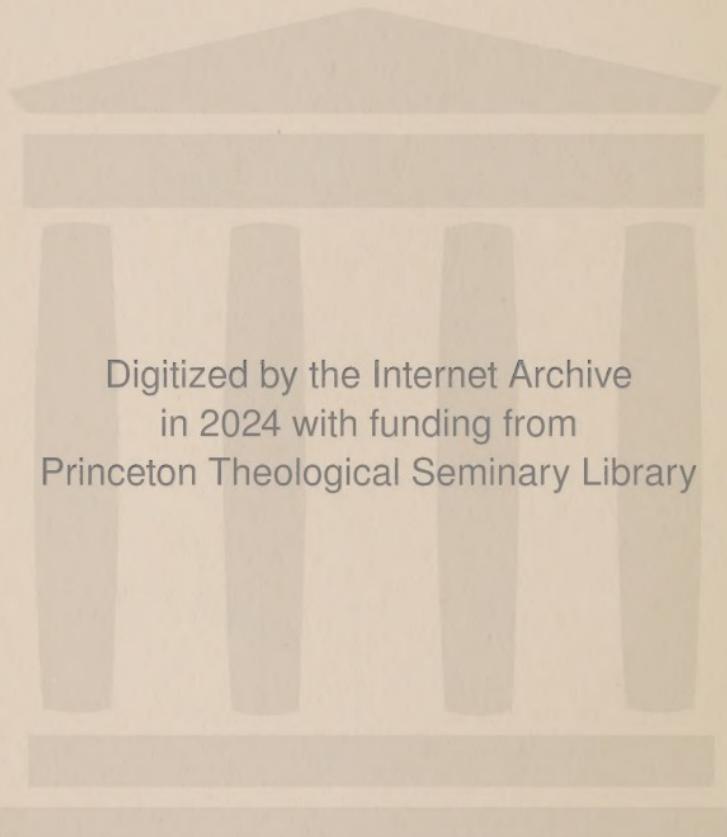






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Jesus the worker





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# JESUS THE WORKER

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*The Cole Lectures for 1909  
delivered before Vanderbilt University*

# Jesus the Worker

Studies in the Ethical  
Leadership of the Son of Man

By ✓  
CHARLES McTYEIRE BISHOP, D.D.



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## THE COLE LECTURES

THE late Colonel E. W. Cole of Nashville, Tennessee, donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by Mrs. E. W. Cole to ten thousand, the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows:

"The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual Lectureship in connection with the Biblical Department of the University, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer shall be determined by nomination of the Theological Faculty and confirmation of the College of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Said lecture shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the University, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the Biblical Department."



## Preface

THESE Lectures were delivered in free speech after the preparation of extensive notes. Various personal matters made it impossible to prepare the manuscript for immediate publication; and further delay has been caused by the constant pressure of heavy work and the endless interruptions which a pastor's duties make inevitable. I have sought to reproduce them substantially as they were delivered, purposely pursuing the style and method of spoken discourse. I have departed from this oral method only in so far as the aids to language furnished by tone and gesture and glance must, of necessity, be substituted on the printed page by various forms of expression.

As a pastor, now for the length of twenty years, seeking to keep abreast of the work of critical scholarship as related to the fundamental truths of Christianity, and not with-

out appreciation of the important service rendered by criticism, the author of these chapters is profoundly affected by two impressions which have the force of final conviction in his mind: 1st. If men are to know Christ at all as an effective Redeemer and Saviour they must know Him in the *Man, Jesus, of the New Testament* (which, after being subjected to all the tests of legitimate criticism, stands, as we believe, vindicated, as to its substantial trustworthiness, before the court of last resort, namely—the sane and scholarly judgment of men who attempt to comply with its ethical demands).

2d. Jesus, Himself, must be known in His *complete manhood*. It is not sufficient to know His words. However we may systematize and interpret them,—and matchless as are the truths which they disclose,—when taken alone they leave all but a few men in dull and gross indifference or in admiring but powerless inefficiency.

There are rich and gracious personalities who have the power to give themselves to their friends. In their presence, sanity of

thought and healthful generosity of feeling and brave and ardent conduct become natural and easy. Apart from all theories concerning His "nature" or concerning the "atonement" wrought by Him, Jesus was this sort of personality. Strong, sunny, masterful, calm, His presence and friendship simply enriched and made complete the life of those who received Him. And He can be known in this superior magnetism of His only through *His works*—that is to say, through His conduct in general and the way in which, as a typical man, He viewed the responsibilities of His own life and undertook to discharge them. In this sphere He was the exemplar of the loftiest ethics known to men; and He was the revealer to men of God and of the way to God. In these aspects of His life we want to study Him.

I desire here to express my very great appreciation of the courtesies extended to me during the time of the delivery of these Lectures by Dr. W. F. Tillett and the members of the faculty of the Theological Department

of Vanderbilt University, and Mrs. E. W. Cole, the widow of the generous founder of this Lectureship, whose own liberality has increased the sum of its endowment; and of the gracious attentions and kindness of my most dear friends, Professor and Mrs. O. E. Brown, of the Vanderbilt Campus, with whom I found so delightful a home and with whom I had such congenial fellowship during my visit. And, withal, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my own faithful wife, Mrs. Phœbe Jones Bishop, who carefully protected me from many an interruption and whose tireless patience and fine taste made her my constant adviser throughout the preparation of these Lectures.

CHARLES MCTYEIRE BISHOP.

*Mexico, Mo.*

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LECTURE I  
JESUS THE MAN

“ If Jesus Christ is a man,  
And only a man, I say  
That of all mankind I will cleave to Him,  
And to Him will cleave alway.

“ If Jesus Christ is a God,  
And the only God, I swear  
I will follow Him through heaven and hell  
The earth, the sea, and the air ! ”

—Richard Watson Gilder.

## LECTURE I

### JESUS THE MAN

TO furnish “a clearer vision of the august Figure who invites the judgment of each man’s conscience, who lays His hands on each man’s heart,” is the purpose expressed in the Prologue of his *Life of the Master* by Dr. John Watson—whose name in the list of Cole Lecturers must add to the honour which each speaker, whether previously distinguished or not, feels when invited to occupy this responsible position.

The words are a fine phrasing of the supreme, and even lifelong, effort which a thousand earnest students of our day are making ; and they might have been used to express the specific purpose of more than one of the distinguished courses of lectures delivered upon this foundation. I could not, of course, add a single significant stroke to the work so completely done by these my

honoured predecessors ; and I must therefore have been compelled to turn to some other theme had it not seemed to me possible to invite you to join me in a study of the life and personality of the Son of Man from a view-point somewhat removed from that occupied by them.

I am adventuring no little, and am quite painfully aware of the risk I run of being misunderstood : but I am moved by considerations which I regard as of great importance to propose a careful study of Jesus of Nazareth, *as a man of action*—working at life's tasks just after the fashion represented in the Gospels—as throwing light upon the religious problems of our own times—ethical, social, ecclesiastical and personal. So far as I am aware no such definitive attempt to study the human Jesus from the standpoint of the evangelical believer has been made hitherto. Our belief in His humanity has been little more than a matter of formal confession ; it has not been made by us a basis for the study of the practical Christian life. But I am thoroughly convinced that

the movement described as a "return to Christ," which has so refreshed theology in recent years, must finally be understood to mean the return also to the practice of the principles of Jesus as He wrought at the task which He made His life-work and encountered the experiences through which His human soul struggled dauntless to the end.

The Rev. James H. F. Peile begins the Bampton Lectures for the year 1907<sup>1</sup> by raising the question "why the kingdoms of this world have not long ago become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ—the question why our Christianity does not make us better men and women." Very arresting questions are these ; and very courageous and suggestive answers does the author propose. But I am daring enough to think that we may be here about to discover, if not the final answer, at least the road to a further answer to these questions, as we seek to return to Jesus who lived His human life under the dominion of the belief that He had been born into the world to be a witness

<sup>1</sup> *The Reproach of the Gospel, etc.*, Longmans, Green & Co.

(*μαρτυρίσω*)<sup>1</sup> to the truth, and who could say as explanatory of it all, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day." I think, with all of our studies, we have somewhat failed to understand Jesus as a man and to get the lessons of His life. We have been arguing about interpreting and systematizing "His teachings"—by which we have meant the verbal utterances ascribed to Him in the Gospels. We have been speculating about the mystery of His personality—His Messiahship—the nature of His being as Son of God. We have never gotten sufficiently acquainted with Jesus, the Son of Man, the man of energy and activity, whose human motives and purposes are both intelligible and plainly portrayed in the Gospel stories. The acts of Jesus will suggest to us, if we are willing learners, the perfect type of that life in which the kingdom of God is established in the individual, and through the influence of which as an instrument it is established in the world abroad. The ethics of Jesus—not only as contained in His words,

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 37.

but also as revealed in His conduct—is more easily understood and can be more effectively put into practice when we thus know Him.

We have left this field of investigation—which was ours by right of eminent domain—to the critics of the so-called advanced school in Germany and their co-labourers in England and in this country. Writers of this school are, at this very hour, trying to give an account of Jesus by reconstructing from an undiscriminated lot of material—some of which is mere literary rubbish—an official “*Messiah*” or *Jewish Rabbi*, whom they allow to have been somewhat independent of the schools principally because He was not trained in the schools. Or they describe a common wandering Jewish healer and exorciser—who they are willing to confess was a remarkably pure and gentle man, and to whom they ascribe an unusual gift of speech as well as mastery of the greatest religious ideas current in his time, and some power of original application of them ;—and they seek to adjust Jesus to this standard,

paring down the form of the Person of the Gospels to the mediocre size and shape of this "cast" of their own construction.<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to say from this platform that the mind of Christendom cannot rest here. What I wish to suggest is that we recover this territory for ourselves, and by reproducing in ourselves the "mind which

<sup>1</sup> It is obviously impossible for us to attempt in these Lectures a discussion of the critical questions which are preliminary to the study of the historic Jesus. I can only speak from the standpoint which I myself have reached after much study and travail of soul. But what I intend by this paragraph is to express my judgment that it is a crime against history to treat the apocalyptic and rabbinical literature issuing from about the epoch of the Christian era as furnishing the most trustworthy material for the historical reconstruction of the person and work of Jesus, while the Gospels are cavalierly hacked to pieces by critical instruments of various degrees of sharpness, because of their friendliness to certain ideas which the critics have before dismissed as untenable. I speak of course with much diffidence, as I cannot claim critical competence beyond that simply of an earnest student of the questions involved. I am, nevertheless, convinced, and I confidently expect the final judgment of scholarship to be, that in the Gospels of the New Testament we have an amazingly accurate, and also adequate, account of the teaching and the work of Jesus during His public life. And I also expect that the ancient judgment of the Church will be substantially reestablished that in them we have a clear and sane and true estimate of the meaning of Jesus' life, and of His significance for man, and of His relation to God.

was in Christ" as revealed in His human life, realize the "exaltation" of the human which was intended to be the consequence of the "emptying" and the "humbling" of the divine.

Moreover we shall thus be able to utilize for constructive and even perhaps propagandist purposes the work of the critics themselves, who are—many of them—not so far from the evangelical standpoint as they (and we) think—"Christians," as we understand the term, without knowing it. It is not only interesting, it is almost pathetic, to observe the continued exaltation and honour of Jesus exhibited by some of the most earnest and conscientious students of the schools whose scientific and philosophical predilections lead them to a purely naturalistic interpretation of His life. For instance Prof. Wilhelm Bousset, of Göttingen, one of the most influential teachers of this school, after a magnificent discussion of the power and meaning of Christianity—broad-minded, spiritual, Johannine in style and substance—says, "Now all this is not laid down in the Gospel

as a doctrine, but is concentrated in a portrait of extraordinary power and significance;" and he proceeds to describe the consciousness and the power of Jesus and finally His death with the eloquence and almost in the terms of a zealous evangelical : " He suffered the death of the criminal, but His spiritual and moral glory consecrated even the shameful death on the cross as the holiest symbol of humanity. The very nature of His subjection lifted Him high above the greatest leaders of men in the domain of the spiritual life. In the presence of the incomparable glory of His cross the glory of all others fades away. . . . Then came Easter and Whitsuntide. And there where Jesus had apparently been subjected to a shameful death they planted the flag of victory, and the cross became the symbol of honour, the crucifixion the most powerful of God's miracles."<sup>1</sup>

Even one of our American representatives of the historical school and of "liberal theology," Prof. George Burman Foster,—ob-

<sup>1</sup> *What is Religion?* Wilhelm Bousset, pp. 234-237.

ject of much objurgatory criticism,—says, in the first of the books by which he has so greatly offended “orthodox” Christians, and in which, in my humble judgment, he is heroically faithful to certain very false literary and philosophic canons,—“It is the human Jesus *as expression of the personal life of God that faith craves* and criticism allows. It is the personality of Jesus for which faith cares —cares, however, because in Jesus we find a nowhere else existing revelation of the divine will, and a nowhere else postulated aim of human life. The Christian is one who knows God in the man Jesus, one for whom Jesus is the personality which determines his relation to God.”<sup>1</sup> Such thirst for God—such nearness to God—does the careful study of the man Jesus, even from the rationalistic standpoint, produce. Who can fail to see that the results of such study may therefore be made the means of applying the historic Christian faith to the life-tasks of the followers of Jesus both as individuals and as mem-

<sup>1</sup> *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, by George Burman Foster, p. 405.

bers of society? By following the man Jesus along the roadways of His earthly career we may find a way of approach to those heights, otherwise inaccessible to some, where He stands transfigured, revealing a glory with whose light no enhancement of earthly shining can be compared.

One other justification of these studies and of this mode of approach I wish to suggest in the words of another representative of the modern standpoint, the late Dr. Albert Wellman Hitchcock, whose volume, entitled *The Psychology of Jesus*, is an important contribution of American scholarship to Christological literature. "He [Jesus] has so much of truth to give that has not yet been acquired by any age or race, that He must be interpreted afresh to each generation, and to every people in the terms with which they are familiar, according to the mental atmosphere they breathe. The manna of yesterday loses its freshness and its savour to-day, but the same liberal hand provides for the hungry still, and we must arise to gather for our need."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 255, 256.

If I may be able to assist the young apprentices of the Gospel, who constitute the body of hearers for whom these Lectures are primarily designed, to a more intimate acquaintance with Jesus the daily practitioner of the principles which He preached, as He went forward in the way of fulfillment of all righteousness, I shall be most happy.

After what has been said it is scarcely necessary to add that while I am purposely limiting the scope of our study to the personality and life of Jesus the man, as revealed by His works, I shall not hesitate, if occasion demand, to use the forms of speech of ordinary traditional Christianity, which more commonly refer to Him as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. It would be affectation, or worse, for a minister of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Lord to attempt to carry through a series of studies in the character and career of Jesus under such self-imposed restraint as forbade the confession of his faith ; or such as excluded an occasional expression of his jubilant sense of possession in Jesus Christ of the unsearch-

able riches of eternal life through God's amazing gift of His beloved Son. On the contrary, as already intimated, I hold to the personal opinion that only the convinced believer in Christ the Redeemer is in position to make a completely intelligent study of Jesus the Man at work in the world. Reserving for the second Lecture the still further explication of the epithet "Worker" as used in the general title of the Course, I turn after this long introduction to suggest, if I may in the remainder of this hour, an outline sketch of the Person behind the work.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

So vivid and realistic are the impressions made by the Gospels, as one reads them, of Him who moves majestically through the scenes which they depict that one must needs argue with one's self to show that one has not really looked upon that Form, standing and speaking with commanding voice in the synagogue at Nazareth or in the midst of the crowd by the lake shore near Caper-naum; moving swiftly and alone out to the

hillside in the night and bending in prayer before God ; climbing the rough face of the mountain at Gerasa<sup>1</sup> in the twilight after the long day's work, and there in the dusky region of the tombs subduing the haunted spirit of the screaming demoniac into sanity and peace ; lying asleep like a child (child-hearted man that He was !) on the "cushion" of the boat, or walking with set face ahead of the amazed disciples on the last journey to Jerusalem. But these are really *glimpses of a Soul* which we have had ; and there is scarcely even a hint of a single physical quality, much less of any peculiar feature or characteristic of that earthly figure in which for a while the Soul dwelt. Only, at most, in rare and momentary flashes is the eye of the onlooker suddenly flared open as with the beginning of the consciousness of sight, and only a little less rarely the ear alertly awakes to the sound of that voice which uttered such "gracious words," and yet "spoke with such authority," which aroused with its power the palsied will of hopeless invalids

<sup>1</sup> Gergesa ; modern Kersa.

and at the end of all, after “the exhaustion of Gethsemane and the laboured walk to Calvary rang out from the cross” with undiminished strength.<sup>1</sup>

We shall not be going far astray, however, when we regard the Man of Nazareth as a man of vigorous frame and glowing health. His endurance of the long fast in the wilderness, His excursions into the hills, His long and frequent journeys on foot, His ability to work all day and spend the whole or a great part of the night in prayer, all seem to be unmistakable indications as to these points. And His outdoor life and His training as a builder tend to confirm the reasonableness of this conjecture. For the rest we are left with little more than questionings. Did not He to whom the mothers brought their children, and in whom the children themselves trusted so implicitly, have abundant good nature, and also the signs of power which give confidence, written upon His face and revealed in His bearing? Do not His easy command over men, and the authority which was so

<sup>1</sup> *The Personality of Jesus*, by Charles H. Barrows, p. 15.

quickly recognized, point to a dignity and mastery which must have reached men through the eye as well as otherwise? Would not He whose message was a "gospel," and whose well-remembered sermon began with the exclamation—"Happy!"<sup>1</sup>—would not He have joyous countenance? These are bare hints, which may however serve to make a little more real to us Him whose humanity was in all points like our own with the one great exception of sin.

### HUMAN RELATIONS

We advance a step in our knowledge of Him as we follow the records which show Jesus in the midst of those family relationships which *for us* determine so largely the very warp and woof of life's pattern. As a child He was "subject to His parents" and knew the experiences of an elder son among brothers and sisters. We are justified in suggesting that in later life these family ties seem to have been more tender and sacred to Him personally, though conventionally

<sup>1</sup> Μακάπτοτ—blessed.

less binding than to others of His people and His time. In wider circles He was known as a "carpenter" or builder, during the years of His young manhood. He was at first the assistant of Joseph and was known as "the carpenter's son." After Joseph's death He was doubtless the supporter of the family, and possibly the one carpenter ("*the carpenter*") of the village. He came in contact with men therefore in the relations which His trade would necessitate, working for them according to agreement, receiving wages from them, subject in a sense to their call and dependent for a living upon His labour for them. In the later period, of which we have the fuller record of the Gospels, He appears in other relations. He has His circles of friends, and inside them still closer intimacies. To a few He pours out His innermost thoughts concerning the subject of chief interest to the worthier Jewish people—the coming of the kingdom of God,—the theme which was of all-absorbing interest to Him during these years of His public life. Still later there are

disclosures in confidence of His sense of disappointment with His people and of His anticipation of increasing antagonism to Him as a Teacher, and at length of persecution and death. The closeness of His attachment to His friends and the love which He inspired in them is one of the most interesting and touching features of the human life of Jesus. We must not overlook the fact that He also appears now and then in the more conventional relations which social customs impose. He was a guest on at least two occasions at public banquets. At other times we see Him privately "entertained," in families of varying social position. And twice or thrice in His life we may properly speak of Him as a host providing for the comfort and pleasure of guests. But this scanty data is manifestly insufficient even to suggest to us the rather conspicuous place which Jesus held in the social life of the circle of His acquaintances. His strait-laced critics actually charged Him with being a reveller and companion of the disreputable and dissipated—"Behold, a glut-

tonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

There is still to be noted, of course,—what lies so plain on the face of the Gospel stories, but is so often unnoticed in its human significance—the fact that He was a public teacher, and as such set men's minds going on the subjects which He made the theme of His instruction. He taught His more friendly hearers in groups of various size, and upon occasion addressed mixed multitudes upon the primary principles of the moral and religious life; and now and then He did not hesitate to engage in controversy with questioners and critics. As a consequence of this there were of course divisions among His hearers and at length factions developed, a small party acknowledging Him as leader, and another, made up chiefly of Jewish officials, very bitterly opposing Him.

When our attention has once been called to it we cannot avoid seeing the man Himself revealed in the midst of these purely human relationships. His sympathy with men in all those common affairs that go to

make up human life is clearly exhibited. His works of healing wrought in response to parental appeal were a recognition of the sacredness of the family, for the protection of which as an institution He also laid down the only specific statute for the regulation of society which He ever announced.<sup>1</sup> His language reveals a sympathetic understanding of the relations of servant and master, of employer and employed. The cases of the idler and the labourer had attracted His attention; and His friendly concern for the poor, the overworked, and for the outcast classes—"publicans and sinners"—is plainly exhibited on almost every page of the story.

### HIS EDUCATION

The education of Jesus was derived, so far as we can tell, from His religious training in the home and synagogue; from His contact with men in the simple, social life of the village and as the "carpenter" of the community, and in occasional visits to Jerusalem;

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 2-12. See Wernle's *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 93.

from His observation of and reflection upon what we call "nature" as seen around Nazareth itself and more distinctly from the hill above the town, and in the country round about when as a "builder"<sup>1</sup> He visited one or another Galilean town; and from such knowledge of the great outside world as would inevitably drift into the every-day consciousness of a people subject to the rule of a hated nation known by the name of the distant city which was the centre of its empire and the residence of its court. The life of the village of Nazareth would also be somewhat influenced by the fact that it was situated on one of the great trade routes from Asia to Africa and Europe, and that caravans from Arabia and the farther East would be passing through affording the means by which the natives of the land could make their contributions to the world's commerce in such exports as olive oil and wine and linen goods.<sup>2</sup> "Men of all nations, busy with

<sup>1</sup> Τέκτων.

<sup>2</sup> See Schurer's *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, Vol. I, p. 41 f.

another life than that of Israel, would appear in the streets of Nazareth ; and through them thoughts, associations and hopes connected with the great outside world, be stirred." <sup>1</sup>

As a child Jesus would have come to be familiar in some degree with the great literature of His people. He would be required in the home to commit many passages of the Old Testament Scriptures to memory, and He would constantly hear it read in the original Hebrew and translated into the vernacular of the people <sup>2</sup> in the services of the synagogue which He habitually attended. But it is very evident that He also procured copies of various Scripture rolls for Himself and read them with peculiar freshness of insight and comprehension. This is clear from His criticism of certain current interpretations of the Scriptures, and from the freshness of His own rendering, and the aptness of His quotations in support of His own new teaching. He very manifestly read for Himself,

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Stapfer's *Jesus Christ Before His Ministry*, p. 79.

and His oft-repeated question,<sup>1</sup> "Have ye not read, etc.?" "Did ye never read?"—was a rebuke to others for not following a like independent course. He was very familiar with the "Books of Moses" and their stories of the patriarchs, frequently quoting from the book of Deuteronomy;—with the prophets generally, including Ezekiel and Daniel; with the "Wisdom literature," especially the book of Proverbs;<sup>2</sup> but His favourite books were those of Isaiah and the Psalms. With the great ruling thoughts of these classics of His own people His mind was saturated; and His soul was filled with delight in the contemplation of their lofty spiritual ideals. Never for a moment, however, did He acknowledge one of them as His master. He calmly held them to account before a standard of His own, and only recognized any "authority" in them as that of fidelity to the truth, though He also seemed by implication to allow the sanction of a superintend-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 3, 5; xix. 4; xxi. 16, 42; xxii. 31, *et al.*

<sup>2</sup> See Kent's *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs*, Part III, Chapter II.

ing providence over all the books contained in the so-called "sacred writings."

### OTHER HUMAN LEARNING

What of human learning Jesus possessed in addition to this general knowledge already mentioned we have no means of knowing certainly, but it was probably very little. Some of His own countrymen were astonished at His learning,<sup>1</sup> but they evidently referred to His skill in interpreting the Scriptures which they thought remarkable since He had never been a member of one of the rabbinical schools. It is quite possible that He was more or less familiar with the ancient Hebrew language in which the sacred rolls of the Scriptures were preserved. And it also seems likely that He could converse in the Palestinian Greek, the same that was then current throughout the commercial world and generally the means of communication between the officials of the Roman government and the peoples over whom they ruled.

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 15.

So far as the records throw any light upon the subject it appears that Jesus held the views concerning the physical universe which were prevalent in His time. The world of "science"<sup>1</sup> which looms so large against our skies to-day was as truly an undiscovered country then as—for instance—was the continent of America; and any allusion, direct or indirect, on the part of Jesus, to the one

<sup>1</sup> It really should go without saying that if the Son of God "took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man," He must, in order to the carrying out of all the purposes for which He came, have been "found in fashion as a man" of His own times. It is the last degree of folly for smatterers in "science" to base a criticism of the divinity of Christ upon Jesus' apparent ignorance of the elements of our modern cosmology. And on the other hand it is, in my judgment, also absurd for others of us to find in the implications of Jesus' speech any divine affirmation of the correctness of ancient views either concerning the constitution of the physical world, or the history of mankind, or even of Israel and its literature. In fact all such matters—science and history too—really lie in the region of that human "knowledge which shall vanish away." And indeed one does not require to attain to an impossible altitude of view-point and length of perspective to see that even what we call the "scientific attitude," is, in all probability, merely a temporary state of mind, and describes the groping of the race through a transitional period to a new adjustment of the elements of its "knowledge." The time will perhaps come when the lovers of Jesus will rejoice that no word of His seemed to confirm the theories of what we so boastfully describe as modern science and philosophy.

as to the other, would be impossible and grotesquely self-contradictory.

### HIS INTELLECTUAL TRAITS

The most notable traits of Jesus' native intellect seem to have been :

1. His *originality*, shown not so much in the utterance of novel sayings, or the disclosure of previously unheard-of truths, as in a profound apprehension and appreciation of fundamental principles and the definite and clear working out of their implications into life. He used the language of the time, and in His religious teaching continually referred to the most revered ancient authorities ; but there was a freshness and power in His speech, as if an unexpected spring had transformed a glacial waste into a blossoming garden ; and everywhere He was greeted with the exclamation : “A new teacher !”—“An authoritative teacher !”

2. His *insight into human nature*, exhibited in His reading of the very thoughts of both friends and enemies,<sup>1</sup> anticipating their

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 4 ; xii. 25 ; Luke vii. 39, 40 ; ix. 47 ; John ii. 24, 25 ; vi. 61, 64.

questions,<sup>1</sup> and, as in the case of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman,<sup>2</sup> probing deep beneath their concealments to the very secret of their moral need.<sup>3</sup>

3. Growing out of these two qualities—His fidelity to foundation truths and His power of reading the heart and mind of man—was the incomparable alertness and skill, impossible to surprise and irresistible in its return, with which He answered His opponents and routed the venturesome representatives of Scribal smartness who tried to impale Him on one of the horns of an artificial dilemma, or catch Him in a specially constructed trap of rabbinical logic. His unexpected appeals to their own authorities, His use upon occasion of Socratic irony and of the *argumentum ad hominem*, as well as His penetration always to the very heart of a question however obscured in statement it might be, made Him a most masterful and perfectly invincible debater.

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 23; John vi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. and iv.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xviii. 22, *et al.*

## HIS PERSONALITY

But the physical and intellectual qualities which we have been describing are after all the mere accidents of a human life. And when we come to this most significant life of all history what we would especially know is that elusive but most real sum and substance of His essential being which we call His *personality*. And while it is one of the main objects of this whole course of Lectures to study this personality of Jesus, we may here take note of certain features of it which stand out most distinctly as one carefully surveys His ministry from its beginning to its close.

### 1. *His Sense of a Mission.*

First of all we are aware in Him of a tremendous *earnestness* which we have never elsewhere seen.<sup>1</sup> He is a man with a mission, clear and definite, and the purpose of its fulfillment as it appears in Him is as resistless and unhesitating as the movement of

<sup>1</sup> *Goodness*, in Jesus, which some might think should be mentioned first of all, does not seem to be a *quality or phase* of His character, but rather its underlying foundation, its living breath, its sovereign power—that in which He lives and moves and has His very being.

the tide towards the shore. Whatever temporary recession may at any time appear to the eye of the onlooker is only a gathering of the forces of the waves for a further and overwhelming advance. His constant explanation of His own work was, "I am come that——," "I am come to——"<sup>1</sup> followed by some expression of the object of His ministry. Indeed in His very childhood this thought of His mission possessed Him.<sup>2</sup> He gave expression to it in His first public preaching at His old childhood's home when He applied to Himself the words which told of the great prophet's divine call;<sup>3</sup> and from this time onward He was impelled by the consciousness that He had a baptism to be baptized with, and was greatly straightened till it be accomplished.<sup>4</sup> He refused to be diverted by the pleading of disciples, by the offer to make Him king, by the opposition of officials, by the approach and certainty of martyrdom. And those strange words ut-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 17; ix. 13; xx. 28; Luke xix. 10; John ix. 39; x. 10, *et. al.*

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xii. 50.

tered on the cross—"It is finished"—seem to have been His exultant assertion of the accomplishment of His mission, even in the pangs of death.

## 2. *His Consciousness of Power.*

A second outstanding feature of the career of Jesus, revealing His personality, was His remarkable *consciousness of power*. We do not need to make a distinction—which it appears Jesus Himself would not make in His own case<sup>1</sup>—between physical and moral or spiritual power. Whatever the nature of the task which appealed to Him unhesitatingly He did it; or if there was delay it was not for lack of power. The only limitations which appear at all in the records were those, in the first place, which propriety (righteousness) imposed, and that presented by unbelief in those whom He would serve. Otherwise there was no question of "difficulty," less or more, in connection with the problem or the task. Indeed it was His sense of personal power, on the occasion of "the Temptation," which seemed to offer an opening to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 2-6 and parallels.

the spirit of evil who suggested the exercise of that power to subdue nature to His own uses; or to win admiration and followers among men merely by the doing of astounding deeds; or to achieve universal dominion by the ruthless overriding of all opposing forces. His response to these temptations was itself a magnificent triumph of moral power.

The opening words of the great Victorian Laureate's greatest poem were aptly chosen—"Strong Son of God,"<sup>1</sup>—for this describes the Hero of the Gospels from the time when the Baptist's announcement, "There cometh after me He that is mightier than I,"<sup>2</sup> began to be fulfilled, and Jesus "returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee,"<sup>3</sup> until that later time when His disciples heard Him say, "All power hath been given unto Me."<sup>4</sup>

### 3. *His Love for Human Kind.*

It is almost impossible to speak of the love of Jesus except in platitudes—so much mere

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. See Bishop Alexander's *Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18.

sentiment has been uttered concerning it. But just simple love of humanity—the outgoing of a soul in behalf of others—seems to have been a new thing in the world with the coming of Jesus. Here it was, however, with Him. He loved His own people, but not them alone. He loved the unlovely—the publicans and sinners, the poor and the outcast. He loved humanity itself and in general. The sight of the great multitude aroused His compassion, and He tenderly healed their sick and taught them all the way of life, regarding them as sheep not having a shepherd.<sup>1</sup> He provided food for their hunger though He would not turn the stones into bread for Himself. He also loved men separately as individuals. The young ruler who came to Him seeking the way of eternal life ; Mary and Martha, the Bethany sisters, and their brother Lazarus ; the poor sinning woman of the city who followed Him to the home of Simon the Pharisee ; and Zaccheus the rich tax collector of Jericho are examples of this personal affection. He loved His own

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 36 ; Mark vi. 34.

disciples with a passionate friendship in behalf of which He was willing to lay down His life.<sup>1</sup> And He loved even His enemies, praying especially for His persecutors when dying.

\*       \*       \*       \*

And so it came about that in this era of grace, as it has ever since been called, there appeared, among the sons of men, One in whom were found perfectly ensphered these prime elements of manhood, Purpose, Power, Love. Each seemed to give the others perfect balance and thus to keep the life itself in untrembling poise. In Him power and intensity made the conditions of perfect calmness. So there was no fanaticism, and nothing fretful or breathless. "Unhasting, unresting," His life swung with the steadiness and momentum of a star round the great centre of its orbit. His gladness and courage ; His resourcefulness and simplicity ; His freedom of spirit with definiteness of aim ; His wonderful "big-brotherliness" but unswerving adherence to righteousness of con-

<sup>1</sup> John x. 11, 15, 17-18; xv. 13.

duct, unite to compel from us a title never otherwise bestowed. He was *The Son of Man*. May we seek to go further? Nay, are we not confronted with the unsearchable? His own language and conduct bore the confession of something in Him which others could not understand, or could not bear if they knew. There were fathomless depths of reserve in Him. There were heights mysterious and inaccessible. His tones sometimes rang with a note of ineffable sadness as He thought of human weakness and need ; but His words and His works alike carried the power and gift of eternal life. Who was He? He was more than Son of Man. He was—yes, He was Son of God.



LECTURE II  
THE ACTS OF JESUS

" . . . I  
Am no tongue hero, no fine virtue prattler.  
I cannot warm by thinking. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Cease I to work, I am annihilated."

—*Wallenstein* (Coleridge's Translation).

## LECTURE II

### THE ACTS OF JESUS

THESE Lectures are not in any sense a discussion of questions of technical theology. They are an attempt to utilize the facts of the human life of Jesus in the interest of practical Christianity.

I have had two aims in mind in the course of their preparation :—First, to do my utmost to bring forth the figure of Jesus from the mist of unreality in which He has been too much hidden by forms of speech and modes of thought which were antiquated and dead for the generation in which we live. Second, to help to fix in the mind and heart of the young candidates for the ministry, who make up the audience which I was specially appointed to address, those ideals of life which, in my opinion, found perfect expression in the practical activities of the life of Jesus, and which, again in my opinion,

constitute the essential truths for life which these young ministers should dispense to their generation. In doing this I am calling attention to a neglected field and suggesting the outline of a plan for its exploration. Its more perfect cultivation and development will await the further studies of all who are interested. "Jesus the Teacher" and the "Teaching of Jesus" are the subjects of many volumes which have crowded into our libraries in the last fifteen years. They have been—many of them—most illuminating and suggestive, and, since the great work of Hans Hinrich Wendt, have really marked an epoch in the study of our Lord's life and work. So awakening have the discussions become that almost every student of Christian theology and New Testament literature has felt impelled to make his own studies under these headings, if not for public utterance at least for his own private benefit. It has been a most fruitful field of study. It has greatly affected the theological teaching of our time both in substance and in method. It has still more powerfully affected the

preaching of our day, giving an almost endless list of new topics, and a new standpoint for the discussion of old topics. So fascinating and so absorbing have these studies been that at length the exclusive attention which they have commanded has led to a sort of one-sidedness in our view of Him from whom the wondrous teaching came. The Founder has been overshadowed by the Teacher. Indeed there is reason to suspect that the Teacher has been forgotten while we have been absorbed by the teaching; and back of the flashing light of this new exhibit of "His doctrine"—as often the torch-bearer is hidden behind the torch—has been waiting in comparative obscurity the *man Himself* who was at perfect unity with Himself and who wrought out the lofty principles of His teaching into worthy deeds.

#### MAN OF ACTION AS WELL AS THINKER

The thesis upon which I have sought to base this course of lectures is that the Man Jesus is to be known not only by His words but by His acts. One of the most con-

spicuous manifestations of His unique and complete human greatness is to be found in the union in Him of the highest qualities of both the thinker and the man of action. He was "full of grace and truth," and also "He went about doing good." His teaching was but one mode of expression of the manifold energy of His life. His manner of speech reveals this as the aspect of His mission which from the beginning chiefly engaged His own mind.—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"<sup>1</sup> was His childhood's question; while in the years of His later activities He completely realized the poetic ideal of

"the generous spirit, who when brought  
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought  
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought."<sup>2</sup>

According to the fourth Gospel it was early in His ministry that He uttered the words which so remarkably set forth His

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 49, A. V. I think this translation must still be allowed as at least possible.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior."

consecration to His mission, " My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to accomplish His work."<sup>1</sup> It is in this Gospel also that we hear Him saying—in correction of prevailing notions of Sabbath abstention from work,—" My Father worketh even until now, and I work."<sup>2</sup> Here too is His earnest declaration of the urgency of His mission, " We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."<sup>3</sup>

In their own style the Synoptic Gospels give us their story of the mighty Worker. When the Baptist was distressed with doubt, and sent to Jesus Himself for a direct answer as to His Messiahship, the record recounts the *works* which He wrought " in that hour "; and His answer simply cites His own deeds, including the preaching of the Gospel, as fully authenticating His mission.<sup>4</sup> Nor is this all. It was He who said—manifestly of Himself,—" The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (*διακονεῖν*), and to give His

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Luke vii. 18-23. Cf. Matt. xi. 2-19.

life a ransom for many.”<sup>1</sup> He laid special emphasis upon work rather than doctrine as of importance in the character of His own followers, “Not every one that sayeth unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the very oldest of the records of His ministry which is left to us—the Gospel of Mark<sup>3</sup>—is really the story of the ministry of *Jesus as a worker*. “The Acts of Jesus” might indeed have been the title of the little volume. In his noble work, *The Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, first published more than a generation ago, Archbishop Alexander, of Armagh, in quite an old-fashioned manner of study, and in stately, old-fashioned eloquence of style, strikingly presents this view of Jesus’ ministry as given by St. Mark: “One great aspect of our Lord’s earthly life is that it was the life of a *worker*, a life of *toil*. All

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> It is, of course, well known that it is the almost unanimous opinion among scholars that “Mark” was the earliest of the Gospels, and was, or contains, one of the “sources” of both Matthew and Luke.

will admit this. But, when the thoughtful Christian comes to ask himself the foundation for the impression, he will probably find that St. Mark manages to produce it in the most effective way by a very simple expedient. He takes one specimen day of the Galilean ministry; and gives us the fullest record of one day of Jesus which is to be found in any evangelist outside the last great week.<sup>1</sup> What a day of work! The deep thought in the public teaching in the synagogue; the dread meeting with the powers of evil; the healing in the sick-room; the interspace for the little festival of home; the sin, sorrow, suffering crowded before the door; the brief rest; the rising while the dawn scarcely whitens over the desert; the refreshment of prayer; the intrusion upon that sacred solitude; and then the work of preaching, pitying, helping, thinking, healing, closes in upon Him again with a circle which is at once as strong as adamant, and as light as air. It is from St. Mark that we learn to estimate in some degree the divine

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 21-39.

monotony of one of those golden days of God upon earth. We learn how truly that life was a life of *toil*. But the toil was brightened by love, elevated by hope, refreshed by prayer. Its divine enthusiasm was unmarred by the peevishness of lassitude, undimmed by the mechanical respectability of routine. It was like nature which at once works so incessantly, and wears such splendid dreams upon its face.”<sup>1</sup>

#### HISTORIC CREDIBILITY OF THE WORKS OF JESUS

Again, we may say, it is impossible, in these Lectures, to go very far into the questions which criticism raises concerning the historic value of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ works. I can only say that increasing acquaintance with the library of criticism deepens my own conviction that the attempts to disprove the substantial trustworthiness of the synoptic narratives are lacking in force and are indeed practically without foundation. And I call attention briefly to certain

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. pp. 71, 72.

general considerations which comport with this view.

(a) The criticism which has tended to eliminate and erase from the record the account of the "works" of Jesus has been determined almost wholly by the philosophic canon which denies the possibility of "miracle," rather than upon historical or linguistic grounds. But while the critical destroyers go forward laboriously with their work, learning advances in other departments and often leaves them occupying an antiquated and, but for themselves, deserted standpoint. And when we take note of the investigations of the students of the new psychology, including hypnotism and "telepathy" and the effect of mental suggestion in disease, together with the work of the "Society for Psychical Research," we find that some men of good reputation as scientists are claiming as real—as scientifically established—certain phenomena which are very similar or substantially equivalent to some of the so-called miracles of Jesus. Far be it from me—either as a student of Christianity or as one who

holds in high respect the discoveries and achievements of science—to infer and imply that the works of Jesus have now been adequately accounted for on a naturalistic basis by these “new sciences.” What I do point out is that the fatal presupposition in accordance with which the “miracles” of Jesus are summarily excluded from consideration is no longer tenable from the standpoint of the “scientist” himself. The criticism based upon it need not therefore be allowed, nor should the neglect of the study of His works on this account be condoned. We are not obliged to grant that miracles are impossible. It has not been established that Jesus did not work miracles. Moreover, from the data in hand, it *cannot* be so established. It is *assumed* by the unfriendly critics of traditional Christianity. That is all.

(b) But the view by which the “works of Jesus” (except His teachings) are all thought of under the conception of the *miraculous* is itself misleading and untrue. It affords a summary way of disposing of the entire question of the credibility of the Gospel narrative,

and has been unfairly used for this purpose by rationalistic critics. At the same time orthodox believers have seemed to be willing to evade and avoid the issue (and have thus made an unwarranted concession to their critics) by ignoring the works and emphasizing the teaching. But the historical accounts of the acts of Jesus have a right to be considered quite apart from the question of miracles. If it could be proven that "miracles do not happen," and never did and never could happen, it would still remain to be shown that the Gospel records of the works of Jesus were not substantially true, their quality as *miraculous* having been merely a subjective element in the mind of the people among whom He lived. For our purpose in these Lectures they would still be available and immensely significant. Moreover it is altogether probable that we have ourselves exaggerated the aspect of the wonderful in the contemporary estimate of the doings of Jesus. Those who were looking for the Messiah did indeed expect His coming to be attended by signs and wonders. But for this

very reason some of them doubted and disputed the Messiahship of Jesus—because of the lack of the spectacular, the dearth of what *they* would call miracles. Time and again they demanded of Him “a sign.”<sup>1</sup> Such seems even to have been the occasion of the temporary doubt in the mind of John the Baptist; “When John . . . heard the *works* of the Christ he sent by his disciples”<sup>2</sup> to inquire concerning Him. They were not the kind of works he expected. Jesus Himself, however, specially relies upon them to authenticate His mission—not as “miracles” but as moral and spiritual deeds; and He is willing to trust the Baptist’s own judgment after further reflection upon these works.

(c) The works of Jesus are to be interpreted by their motives and their results, not primarily as evidential values bearing upon the question of His Messiahship. He Himself deprecated and rebuked the spirit which delighted only in “wonders” and based its

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 38; xvi. 1; Luke xi. 16; John ii. 18, *et al.*

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 2.

faith upon them. Precisely here we may observe the influence of Jesus the Worker in restoring the age itself to sanity—in His protest against all overemphasis upon the marvellous in His work, while the work itself He prosecuted with unwearying assiduity. Moreover, there were others who wrought “miracles” upon occasion.<sup>1</sup> But *He*, who “came to serve,” who “had compassion” on men and loved them—the poor, the outcast, the disconsolate, the hungry, the ignorant, the sick, the discouraged and the bereaved—*He worked* to relieve and bless, to comfort and strengthen, to uplift and enlighten, to abolish sickness and death and hatred and envy and sin. And the student shuts himself off from the very material which in the case of every other subject of history is valued above all others, when under the influence of a false canon he refuses to see the man as *revealed by the deeds* which most impressed the imagination and the memory of his own generation. And after all it is to be

<sup>1</sup> For instance see Matt. xii. 27, “By whom do your sons cast them out?”

noted that most of the critics who deny the historic verity of the "miracles" as recorded, really return to the acceptance of His *works of healing* (at least) along with His preaching.<sup>1</sup>

We need not retreat from our ground in dismay, therefore, as if we had been about to build upon the sand and had seen the signs of a coming storm. In fact after a great and long continued hue and cry concerning the uncertainty of the historic data of the ministry of Jesus, there are certain elements in the situation—certain unanswerable arguments in favour of the substantial accuracy of the Synoptic Gospels, and certain points of fatal vulnerability in the armour of defense of the critics themselves—which, in my judgment, justify evangelical believers in the comfortable assurance that the confidence in the reality of the Jesus of the Gospels which has pre-

<sup>1</sup> See Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, Eng. Trans., Vol. III, p. 172. W. Bousset, *Jesus*, Eng. Trans., Crown Theological Library, p. 46 f. Arno Neumann, *Jesus*, Eng. Trans., London, 1906, p. 83 ff. Paul Wernle, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Theological Translation Library, Vol. I, p. 97 f. Oscar Holtzmann, *The Life of Jesus*, Eng. Trans., London, 1904, pp. 76, 191-197.

vailed in the Church for more than eighteen centuries is based upon a foundation immovable and irreducible. And one rises from a fresh reading of the Gospels not only satisfied that he has been in contact with an actual personality whose inner and outer life exceeds in its significance any other which the pages of history record—but he carries with him also the feeling that that Figure of the Gospels moved with a vigour among men and wrought with an intensity at the problems arising out of human conditions which has also never been equalled.

So much space has thus been given to the controversy concerning the works of Jesus lest some unfriendly critic should charge, or —what is more important—lest some young student should imagine, that these Lectures had been prepared without any knowledge of the questions of criticism involved, or in mere stupid adherence to traditional notions ; and in order to suggest some of the reasons which seem to the author to justify a series of studies like these.

### JESUS' VIEW OF HIS TASK

Previous to His baptism by John we, of course, know nothing in detail of the acts of Jesus. His experiences in connection with that event—whatever else it may mean—certainly include an unmistakable revelation to His human consciousness of His call to the Messiahship.<sup>1</sup> And the very next picture we have in the Gospel account is of the Man meditating upon and choosing His life-work in view of His intuition of God and His experience of Him, and of His knowledge of the world and of life. For in modern phrase this was probably (at least partly) the significance of “the Temptation.” It is a pictorial account of Jesus’ spiritual struggle in determining His vocation. If He were the Messiah how should He discharge the tasks of His office? Should He be a lord of the physical world, a bread-king? Or a miraculous wonder-doer challenging the submission of the astonished crowd? Or ruler of “all

<sup>1</sup>“Thou art My beloved Son,” etc. (Luke iii. 22; cf. Matt. iii. 17). Whether Jesus had previously known Himself to be the Messiah is a question of controversy which need not here be raised.

the kingdoms of the world”<sup>1</sup>—an emperor with wider sway than that of Rome itself? No. He recognized each of these as suggestions of the spirit of evil. He would live the spiritual life nourishing His soul upon truth; the simple life trusting to God for success; the consecrated life, single-eyed, reverent, obedient—worshipping God and serving “Him only.” With these principles finally settled He began His Messianic career, the aim and purpose of which His conduct and teaching in the months that follow abundantly disclose. Accordingly He went forth, as the fourfold account makes plain, *healing disease, casting out demons, befriending the despised, encouraging the disheartened, rebuking the hard-hearted and hypocritical, offering pardon to the sinner, expounding the kingdom—its relationships and duties, teaching men about God the Father and the personal privileges in Him of all His children.* And this He did not as other men—as if, for a little while, out of sheer pity, He would take time for compassion upon the imbecile and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 8; Luke iv. 5, 6.

outworn ; not this—but as if He had chosen a *profession* to which He had committed Himself with all the passion of a devotee and all the energy of a consuming ambition ; and as if *this were that profession*—to help men, to heal them of their diseases, to lift them out of their weakness ; and above all some way or somehow to get them over sin—the worst of all things,—He and they together to overcome it. Moved by the mastery of a passion, burning but not consuming, of adoring love for God, whom He thought of as the Father of men ; and of compassionate love for men themselves, whom He considered His own brothers, He addressed Himself to the needs of humanity with a courage and a confidence which has ever since put a new heart into men whenever they beheld Him. He saw the misery and lovelessness of mankind without revulsion or contempt, and calmly undertook to save them both here and hereafter from the hell of their own digging—the feebleness and bitterness and spiritual squalour which are the consequence of human stubbornness

and stupidity and rebellion against the rule of God.<sup>1</sup>

### ORGANIZER AND MAN OF DETAILS

To the task thus assumed, sublimely stupendous as it was, He devoted a combination of various forms of vital energy and efficient wisdom never otherwise seen among the sons of men. Faculties and characteristics, usually regarded as incompatible, were united in Him in perfect harmony and balance. He announced far-reaching principles and formulated plans which looked to the final amelioration of human conditions, and at the same time He personally and through His disciples sought to give immediate relief in individual cases. The enthusiastic service of the "charity worker" and the patient wisdom of the sociologist were both His. He was, as already noted, an original and richly resourceful teacher, and also an individual practitioner of the principles which He taught. He was, moreover, a leader and executive, possessed of

<sup>1</sup> See Hermann's *Faith and Morals*, p. 43.

the organizing instinct; and He purposed to found and did found a permanent institution. It is of course plain that an elaborate and showy organization, even if needed or desired, would have been impossible in a movement which commanded so small a number of sincere followers. It is not, however, altogether fanciful to say that "the Twelve" were "organized," Peter being their head and Judas their treasurer; while, upon a basis quite as well established as that of some conjectures gravely offered by historical critics, it might be suggested that Peter, James and John were probably a kind of "central committee," and that Matthew was the "secretary" of the body.<sup>1</sup> The sending out of the Twelve and later of the Seventy, two by two, was an act of significant executive wisdom. An interesting exhibition of this gift of Jesus is quite unintentionally given in the story of the "feeding of the five thousand."<sup>2</sup> To begin with His mood as compared with that of the disciples

<sup>1</sup> See *Expositor's New Testament*, Introduction, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Mark vi. 31-44, and Luke ix. 11-17.

may be noted. The thronging crowd was a perplexing and discomposing problem to them; but Jesus had the easy air of one to whom a chaotic condition is a thing easily resolved. He had the composure of the born organizer, and when He attacked the problem it yielded at once. Luke says, He made them "sit down in companies (*κλισίας*), about fifty each." Mark, more graphically,—doubtless reporting an eye-witness—says, "He commanded that all should sit down by companies (*συμπόσια συμπόσια*, dining-party by dining-party). . . . And they sat down in ranks (*πρασιά: πρασιάτ*, garden-plot by garden-plot) by hundreds and by fifties." Every important word used implies orderliness and the simplification of the situation. And, while the arrangement seems quite natural and easy as we look back upon it now, it was a stroke of genius at the moment when the mob-like crowd swarmed weary and hungry and leaderless there on the hillside green.

#### LUKE'S PICTURE OF THE WORKER

If we turn now to that one of the Gospels

which most nearly approaches the modern conception of the essential requirements of history or biography—namely accuracy of report, correct insight into personality and dramatic appreciation of incident—and read it sympathetically, we cannot fail to see there, moving across the pages, the most athletic and achieving Figure that ever struggled in the arena of human conflict and endeavour. The quality of energy, as already noticed, appears even in the glimpses which we catch of Him in childhood: “The child *waxed strong*”;<sup>1</sup> He was anxious to be “about His Father’s business”;<sup>2</sup> He “increased in stature.”<sup>3</sup> As the living pictures of the growing personality pass in swift succession before us the man of enthusiasm and intensity advances to His work “full of the Holy Spirit”;<sup>4</sup> “in the power of the Spirit.”<sup>5</sup> The story of the first sermon at Nazareth<sup>6</sup> is of a *man of action* inaugurating an enterprise. His “text” itself tells of the burning in His breast and

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 49.

*Ibid.*, ii. 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 16–27.

the activities by which He means to give it vent. When, as a consequence of His preaching, His townsmen were angered at His ambitious program, He swiftly moves to another city to make it His place of abode and around it as a centre, to prosecute His unwearying activities. We see a man of broad outlook and perfectly wholesome spirit, capable of untold work, strong, rich-souled, happy, sympathetic, arraying Himself against whatever was depraving and narrow and morbid in human thought and experience, and just setting to rights all that He found wrong—whether physical or mental or moral, whether religious or social or personal. He is so abundantly and astoundingly resourceful and great that the brief outline story of a single day<sup>1</sup> shows Him quietly commanding peace in the soul of a raging madman, restoring to happy strength and usefulness an aged and fever-smitten household mother, and in the bounty of a wondrous power to bless, ministering, one

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 31-41; cf. Mark i. 21-38, already referred to in Archbishop Alexander's account, pp. 58-60.

by one, to the needs of all the sick and broken members of the community until we get the impression that there was no trouble of body or soul left in the little seaside village.

When, later, the field of His activity widens and His work is more particularly described as "preaching" and "teaching,"<sup>1</sup> it is still made plain that His aim was always practical, that He sought concrete results in the life and character of those whom He taught. His words to the conscience-smitten Peter,<sup>2</sup> when a great deed had aroused that impetuous soul to self-abhorrence, were wonderfully wise and restorative. He does not reply at all to his confession of sinfulness; He proposes to him a life of work for others.<sup>3</sup> And during the days of His teaching itinerary which follows we are still reminded that "the power of the Lord was with Him to heal";<sup>4</sup> but light is thrown upon His motives as a worker as it becomes plain that He did not wish to be a mere

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 44; v. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> The form of words used, *εση ζωγραψη*, implies permanent occupation. See *Expositor's New Testament*, Vol. I, in loc.

<sup>4</sup> Luke v. 17.

healer of men's physical infirmities. The problem and task of moral awakening and restoration was that which chiefly engaged Him. He had "authority"—*power* also the word means, as is well known—to deal with sin even to the point of forgiving it outright. Here also appears more conspicuously, as a trait in the masterful manner of the successful worker, Jesus' wonderful air of freedom—His large-minded, healthy disregard of conventional, but essentially unimportant regulations and restraints. His elevation of spirit and His noble defiance of mean prejudice are seen in His management of the case of "the man with the withered hand," whom He healed on the Sabbath day without actually violating even the letter of the law.—Have you not observed, even in some masterful spirits of your own acquaintance, how these self-contained and confident souls, the wise in ability to see into the heart of things, and skillful to crack a hard nut at a single blow,—how they have an exasperating and almost uncanny way of reading your mind and quietly dismissing your case with

a perfectly unanswerable statement or an act altogether above rational objection?—This was what Jesus did here. His question to His spying critics,<sup>1</sup>—“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to destroy it?”—showed that even an act of healing which involved labour would be justified in this case; and then the word of command—“Stretch forth thy hand,”<sup>2</sup>—without the use of any formula of healing, and requiring no act which was forbidden, left them so helplessly dumb, and was at the same time so loftily disregardful of their narrow-minded and artificial scruples, that it is no wonder that Luke says humorously, “They were filled with *emptiness of mind*” (*αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐπλήσθησαν ἀνοίᾳ*).<sup>3</sup>

Thus the Gospel historian brings us to the time when Jesus deliberately enlarged His work by the final selection of “the Twelve,”<sup>4</sup> whom He intended to send out upon a mission like His own. This great event in the progress of the kingdom is first followed by

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 11

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 12–16.

a remarkable exhibition<sup>1</sup> of that power to heal which was characteristic of Him and which upon occasion came forth from Him as light from the sun ; and then by the utterance of those rapturous and holy paradoxes which set forth the conquering principles by means of which the Worker intended to turn the world right-side-up, mingled with denunciation of that fleshly fullness which had fattened in the pigsty of selfishness and which many misinterpreted as only the prosperity which signifies divine approval. This great utterance, which is given here as in the form of continuous discourse, reaches its climax in the allegorical application of it to teachers who did not practice and hearers who did not work.<sup>3</sup> And still the skillful artist, whose masterpiece we are following as He sketches, goes forward in His account as if the picture of the Mighty Helper must be enlarged in order to be life-size ; and now His power of achievement is displayed in a wonderful succession of hitherto unequalled deeds. His power of physical healing first

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 17-19.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 20-38.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 39-49.

reaches its highest expression in the raising of the widow's son of Nain.<sup>1</sup> That of moral restoration is seen in equally astonishing perfection in the redemption of the "woman who was a sinner in the city."<sup>2</sup> And this is soon followed by the disclosure of His mastery over the winds and sea,<sup>3</sup> and this by the healing of the Gerasene demoniac<sup>4</sup> which appeared to be a culminating exhibition of the power to deal with the case of those "possessed of devils." Then, the double healing<sup>5</sup> of the woman with the incurable disease, who merely touched the tassel of His cloak; and of the little daughter of Jairus, whom by a gentle call He awoke out of the sleep of death, continue to sustain the effect of this climax of achievement. Finally, in the feeding of the five thousand,<sup>6</sup> the mind of the reader has become permanently adjusted to the conception of the invincibility of the Worker. Thus the first great section<sup>7</sup> of the book prepares us for

<sup>1</sup> Luke vii. 11-15. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vii. 36-50. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, viii. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, viii. 26-39. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, viii. 40-56. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 10-17.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, i.-ix. 17.

the second<sup>1</sup> which is composed principally of what is called His "teaching," but is really the account of His work of training other workers in the principles which moved His own heart and were exhibited in His own acts.<sup>2</sup>

It is not necessary to pursue further this review of St. Luke's Gospel which, as we have seen, exhibits Jesus in the aspect and character of a Doer of great deeds—a man of action rather than merely a teacher of a new philosophy of life, or of a new and better knowledge of God. That He was the latter is perfectly clear and is taken for granted, but that He was Himself conscious of power to help, and moved by a great compelling love to help man up to goodness and completeness is also written clear upon the face of the Gospel. And it is this that

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 18-xix. 27.

<sup>2</sup> These two (of the three) principal divisions of St. Luke's Gospel might be entitled, "I.—*His Ministry of Personal Service.* II.—*His Educational Work.*" (See *A Standard Bible Dictionary*, Art. Luke, Gospel of.) In fact the author himself recalls his work under the same kind of outline when he speaks of "the former treatise concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts i. 1).

prepares the reader of Luke, as of the other Gospels, for that account of the final period of Jesus' ministry which cannot be understood as the writers of the Gospels themselves understood it, and as it has been interpreted by the historic Church, except as we adhere to the view that Jesus' conception of His own life was as of one who himself must work out the task of humanity—solve the problem of all life; not tell how to solve it, but *solve* it. A mere Plato theorizing about life—a Seneca full of moral apothegms—Jesus never was. As a man He was one who *acted* in accordance with fixed principles which He was able clearly to state and to defend; He was working at the task which He believed was humanity's own. And during that final period of increasing bitterness of opposition and growing fierceness of determination to take His very life, His work goes on in the spirit of the workman to whom the difficulty of his task only lends persistence and strength. Indeed His own view and the historic view regards even His death itself as a deed. It was not a patient martyr's final

submission to the inevitable ; it was the last great defiant assertion of invincibility, the heroic doing of what had hitherto been a miracle beyond all imagining—of dying not passively but actively, and of doing in dying what was the final end of all His doing. This is the only view of His life which is in accord with those great self-disclosing utterances, given by Matthew and Mark, which reveal the innermost purpose of the great Worker's heart : "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many ;"<sup>1</sup> and, in the institution of the Supper, when He said of the cup, "This is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many."<sup>2</sup> These are also echoed in the Johannine sayings : "I lay down My life for the sheep," and "I lay it down of Myself."<sup>3</sup> And this comports with that view which the greatest of all His fol-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 28 and Mark x. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28 and Mark xiv. 24. If the received text of Luke is to be trusted, he also gives this saying in substance, strengthening the meaning of the vicarious teaching by using it also with reference to the bread.

<sup>3</sup> John x. 15, 18.

lowers and preachers constantly declared : "Christ died for the ungodly," "for us" ; "He loved me and gave Himself up for me."<sup>1</sup>

### WORKING IN ALL MOODS

So we have in the Gospels, not simply fragments of the teaching of a great prophet and original thinker, but living glimpses of a Great Worker healing, helping, lifting, relieving pain and inability or inefficiency, comforting depressed and sorrowing souls, undertaking to cure and overcome sin itself —the deepest of all human hurts, the most stubborn of all difficulties in the way of man's growth,—and labouring to build up in individual men the substance of character and the elements of immortal life. In the prosecution of this work He allowed no leisure and gave way to no fatigue. He would not be estopped by opposition; neither would He yield to discouragement. In His teaching and in His personal conduct He met the intellectual and moral tests of life without

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 6, 8 ; Gal. ii. 20.

flinching or quibbling, never retreating and never failing. His human heart broke as His human frame itself gave way under the wounds and suffering of the cross ; but from the beginning to the end of His Messianic ministry He was the indefatigable labourer whose mighty strength turned the course of humanity upward with an impulse which was irresistible and exhaustless. In the glad hopefulness of the earliest days of His mission ; in the growing success and popularity which followed ; in that critical period when at the same time that the widest influence had been reached, the opposing currents were also manifestly widening and deepening as well—and the onlooker, had there been one, might have stood with bated breath to see how the battle would go between Love and Hate, between the spirit of service and the passion of selfishness ;—in the midst of the thick dangers and flaming violence of the later days when His foes were confident of victory and were only waiting for a favourable opportunity to overwhelm Him with their gathered power and fury ; and then in the season of

failure when what once had the form of a successful movement if not of a permanent institution, was seen by friend as well as foe to be in a state of collapse ;—through all, without a step of haste, without a moment's waste, with a steadfastness of purpose which no perturbation of spirit could swerve, He set Himself to His task and pursued it to the end. And when the end itself was at hand and the power of darkness lifted its gloomy crest, imperious and gloating in what seemed its complete victory, without a single stroke of resistance or even a word of protest, He wrought on notwithstanding the aching of His heart and the agony of His body. He healed the wound of the smitten soldier ; gave faithful and kindly warning to the weeping women of Jerusalem ; smote with a look the fallen Peter and raised him to penitence and recovery ; set the power of His prayers, asking for their forgiveness, over against the fury of His enemies raging to their own destruction, and, dying, asserted His power and authority to forgive sin and determine destiny in the case of the thief in whom there was

some germ of moral apprehension left—some honour of goodness through sense of his own unworthiness. And it was in view of a completed task that His earthly vision faded and His spirit rose to its native home in the bosom of the Father.

Was His work indeed “finished,” as He Himself exultantly declared? It was, in the respect that He had by His own example established in permanent validity a successful method of dealing with every kind of morbid and evil human condition, social, political, personal,—even physical, as He “cast out demons” by the authority of a calm and convinced mind and by prayer. It was finished in the respect also that by this very daring as well as doing of hitherto impossible tasks in the field of human endeavour, and for the relief of human need, together with His exposition of the principles of the faith in which He Himself lived and would have all men live,—by these He wrought a complete revolution in the moral and intellectual life of mankind. “He found us children in all that regards the hidden life, and

He left us men.”<sup>1</sup> His task was done, moreover, in the respect that by word and deed He had taught the lesson of labour to all His followers; not only the necessity and dignity, but the joy and restfulness of labour,—

“ Of toil unsever’d from tranquillity  
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows  
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.”

It was complete also in this respect, that all that example and precept, all that courage and strength of will, all that faultless character and supreme love and perfect self-sacrifice *could* do had been done. It is a part of our faith, however—a part which we need not keep in the background at this point—that He labours still, enthroned above all worlds yet “not far from every one of us,” carrying on the healing, enlightening, life-giving work which was successfully begun only in the completed task of His

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Percy Gardner, in *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 119, New York, 1899.

human life. O Patient Worker, touching us with Thy strong healing hands and with such strange, quiet, loving strokes calming our hearts and nerving and girding us for duty! No time or distance separates from Thee. We see Thee, hear Thee, feel Thee still!



LECTURE III

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS  
TOWARDS THE UNIVERSE

"We see a man who, through his clear word, helps us rightly to understand ourselves, the world, above all else God ; and who goes with us in the extremities and conflicts of the present, as a most faithful friend and leader upon whom we may confidently rely."—*George Burman Foster, The Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 394.

"Religion offers to man in the person of Jesus quite the sublimest gift it is within its nature to offer. In other words, it makes him completely independent of the world, by teaching him ever to place his trust in the absolute Lord of this world as in a faithful friend. And it gives him as his object in the world something that alone makes life rich, happy, and of worth, namely, unceasing labour for the general welfare. He who proclaimed this faith, not merely by preaching it, but by showing it forth in the first instance in His own person and realizing it in His own life, necessarily seems to the man who is gladdened by His Gospel, to have moved into immediate proximity to God, and to be exalted beyond comparison high above all other men. The inference is so inevitable that it is impossible for even the most dispassionate intelligence to reject it. Hence the Christian Church will in each and every age join in the confession of the first generations, as set down in the Johannine Gospel (i. 14)—'We beheld His glory, a glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'"—*Oscar Holtzmann, The Life of Jesus, concluding paragraph.*

## LECTURE III

### THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARDS THE UNIVERSE

**T**HE title of this lecture is not phrased in terms of the Gospel vocabulary. It suggests a modern question—the most fundamental of all questions; but it is one which I dare say still finds and always will find its completest and most satisfying answer in the character and work of the Jesus of the Gospels. It was in the light that shone about Him with such clearness here, where other men walk in mist and darkness, that He saw His task with unconfused vision and went to each detail of it with unhesitating definiteness. Now the form which our modern question takes is due to that primary analysis which every thinking soul must make when it distinguishes between the "I" that is conscious, and all the rest, outside of the knowing "I," which we call the universe. In one aspect of it this outer world is made

up of *stuff* which may be apprehended by the senses—measured, weighed, analyzed, compared, classified. This is the universe which what we call Science seeks to interpret, and which it sometimes dogmatically declares is the only universe which we can know. But the inward “I”—the self—becomes aware also of somewhat which awakens *feeling* in man. Fear, longing, hope, love—these go out from the soul into the universe in seeming response to it. There is something there which produces these as “reactions.” Moreover there is the notion of justice, the consciousness of right and wrong, the feeling of the need of mercy and the desire for freedom and for permanence of being, all of which seem to grow out of some commerce of the soul with this outside world from which it knows itself distinct, but apart from which in mere cold separateness of being it could neither know nor feel.

This phase of the universe is as real to most of us, and affects our life as truly, to say the least of it, as the world of sense. Can there be any satisfactory explanation of

it all? *That* is the most fundamental of all questions. And there have been various answers. To the untutored soul of the savage the universe, as far as he thinks of it at all, must seem chaotic, unorganized. He knows not how to interpret its message, or to combine its thousand voices into a harmony. In a little more advanced, but still primitive, stage, by his fancy, man peoples the universe with multitudes of powers and personages to whom he ascribes motives and sentiments like his own. On the other hand, in our day many of the devotees of physical science solemnly protest against any other explanation of the world than that which is offered in accordance with the canons of their own modes of thought. The agnostic and the boor are alike without answer to the mind which questions concerning the deeper meaning of the universe. Often, however, the agnostic's very determined nescience is his own soul's half-acknowledgment of the realities in the realm of the unknown. He is like the boy who whistles in the dark. He wishes *It* to know that he is not afraid. Now

this world, unknown to sense, which is the terror of the ignorant and the despair of the learned, was to Jesus—as it has been to the greatest minds since His day—the source of the very deepest satisfaction. There He found rest. In it were hidden inexhaustible resources to which He had access and upon which He drew in that zealous and tireless ministry of His among the sons of men. His life and teaching, His character and work were based upon this view of the universe which He held. And they therefore furnish an interpretation of it made valid to our minds by the sanity and power and victory of His life.

#### THE UNIVERSE INTELLIGIBLE

Jesus' view of the universe in that aspect of it which we now approach from the "scientific standpoint" was not distinguished by Him from those other aspects which we would now call "religious." This is a distinction which "Science" itself has made in the effort to reduce the knowable world to that of which it professes to have

cognizance. Jesus, without speculation or ratiocination of any kind, intuitively regarded all things—all life, all powers, all worlds, all time and space—as going to make up the complete whole which was intelligible and orderly and progressive under the general view which He held of it. He recognized the relation of cause and effect, specially as revealed in the processes of “nature” and in human history, though He was not concerned always to note the intervention of secondary causes. His certitude concerning the inflexible final prevalence of “law”<sup>1</sup> was not altogether unlike that of the modern physicist, though at first sight the difference between the one meaning of the word and the other seems as wide as the poles. Fundamentally, however, they are not so far apart. Jesus’ use of the ideas of seed-sowing and growth and maturity as affected by soil and season, and His application of these as illustrative of social and moral processes, are evidence of His perfect reliance upon the orderliness of the world,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 18.

visible and invisible. His view of history as progressive and expressive of a purpose moving to completion is manifest in many a pregnant phrase :—"I am come to fulfill";<sup>1</sup> "All things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms concerning Me";<sup>2</sup> "The Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations."<sup>3</sup> Purpose in the past was coming to completion in the present; and also controlled the future.

### UNDER PERSONAL CONTROL

To Jesus the outer world was not a region of unregulated forces nor was it under the dominion of a capricious will. It was the organ of a matchless wisdom and love. It was this which brings the universe of things into harmony with the inner self of man who thinks of it. All, within and without, the world of sense and reason and the world of feeling and duty, are under the same rule. "The Lord your God is one Lord." All—the Great Whole—is the work of a person

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 27-44.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xiii. 10.

who may be known by personal beings, whom Jesus Himself claimed to know in the closest intimacy; whom He called "Father" and actually taught men to call "Father." Father—and *more*; for no single epithet could set forth the fullness of His nature and character whom Jesus represented as determining the nature of the universal all and giving it its character. But Father—sacredest of words descriptive of human relationships—was the best word; and Jesus enriched it with many a suggestive allusion and incident, and gave it distinct significance as an appellation of God by its constant use in the expression "Your heavenly Father." His—the heavenly Father's—nearness, matchless goodness, intimate and loving relation to every-day, human interests—food and clothing, health and happiness, conduct and character—were the thoughts forever in Jesus' mind, furnishing the background for every specific word and act, giving them position and proportion in His life.

#### GOD AND NATURE

We have only a glimpse, now and then, of

Jesus' conception of the relation of what we call "nature," including the various orders of animal life, to the King of All whom He called Father: but what we have is worth noting and is very significant. To the traditional Hebrew notions of God as Creator, and man as the last and highest of His creatures, He added a warmth and vitality and personal meaning which must have changed the whole face of the world to sensitive souls who had been under the influence of the Pharisaic idea of an autocratic King-God, or of the cold deism held by the culture-proud Sadducees of His day. God's use of the forces of nature as His own instruments; His mastery over things and circumstances which to man appear resistive and unyielding; His delight in the world which He had made, and His care for and sympathy with the lower orders of being,—though only revealed in a sentence or a word—give, at last, a complete and harmonious view which constitutes a distinct contribution, unequalled in spiritual meaning and value, to our human notion of the world. None of the great poets, so far

as I know, have risen to the conception of Jesus. Not Wordsworth, who, if he does not deify nature, sees in every phase of it the mystic vehicle of the divine revelation which is unknown otherwise. Nor Tennyson, who, like our own Lanier, humanizes nature, giving it emotions, affections, purposes. He is more nearly approached by Browning who regards the world as the work of God, in the early Hebraic style, and sees in it symbols by which God may be interpreted ; and who recognizes the ardent pleasure of the Divine Inventor and Artist, as when in every spring time "God renews His ancient rapture" felt first in the creation of the world. But Jesus goes beyond all this in recognizing that the whole of inanimate nature and the world of lower living creatures are also the objects of that ineffable personal love whose glory is part of the mystery, as it is also the medium of the revelation, of the Father-God to man. *He* clothes the lily and feeds the raven ; not a sparrow flutters to its death in winter's storm without His care. And the point seems to be not only that man is of much

more value than they, but that "the heavenly Father," when really known by His child, will be found actually to *love* what we in boastful coldness call "lower orders" and "brutes"; and even, in some high, solemn sense, what we call "things." It must have been in sympathy with this view that St. Paul represented the responsiveness of nature to God as that of expectancy and hope as well as of groaning and travail.<sup>1</sup>

### GOD AND MAN

If there is a radiant freshness gleaming through the words of Jesus concerning the relation of the physical and animal world to Him whom He called Father, much more does there come to light in speech and conduct a clear notion of the place Man occupies in the whole scheme of things and in relation to the Ruler of all. He partakes of the nature of the *things* which he contemplates; in a sense he is subject to the world and may be a victim of it; but on the whole he is vastly superior to it. Its forces are the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 19-22.

agencies through which the Father blesses His child. Sunshine and rain, products of field and lake or stream, food and shelter and clothing—these are God's gifts through “nature” to man who is “of much more value” even than the other living things for which He so tenderly cares. So, instead of the terror which man might otherwise feel, or the sense of helpless dependence, or of lonely isolation from the rest of the world, there breathes through all things a spirit of genial and harmonious “working for good”<sup>1</sup> to them who are called the children of God. “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”: What could so completely give rest and assurance, as well as “the upward look,” to souls “troubled and anxious about many things,” as these words made effective by habitual conduct in perfect accord with them. It is not hard to make men feel that “all's right with the world” when they know “God's on His throne.” For, according to Jesus, man was God's child. The relation obtained between

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 28.

God and individual men ; not only between God and the human race as heathen speculation had ventured to hold, or between God and the Hebrew nation as prophet and psalmist had loyally declared. But every man is so truly akin to God that he is under obligations to be like Him in the very qualities which are the essential characteristics of His being. So Jesus did not hesitate to urge upon His own friends the duties and privileges of this high relationship : "Love your enemies . . . and ye shall be sons of the Most High"; "be merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."<sup>1</sup> And He, who called Himself the Son of Man, carried His own precepts out to perfect achievement in His deeds,—so much so that others called Him the Son of God.

Right here, however, in this region of highest personal relationships is the most tragic break in the harmony of the universe. In fact here its *unity* is destroyed. Law which holds elsewhere is fractured here. In-

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 35, 36 and Matt. v. 48.

stead of agreement there is conflict. Where there should be perfect order there is confusion. Man—the highest of creatures—is out of gear with creation. Man, the child of God, is in rebellion against God. He for whom the world was made is both the agent and the victim of a jarring and ruinous unconformity, which sends its shock quaking to the very centre of all things.—It was really this which the Great Worker had come to set at rights. And He came with heart moved by a mighty pity for man who was in such desperate straits as a consequence of this breaking with the ruling spirit of the universe. He had compassion on him. He recognized what we call sin and its fatal effect upon character; but at the same time He rarely ever used the word sin, or sinner, except in the tenderest sympathy and helpfulness—most often coupling with it immediately the thought of forgiveness. A certain state of mind which might be described as sinful, Jesus did unsparingly denounce, but it was altogether a new kind of “sin”; it was religious pretentiousness which hitherto

had been regarded by many as the opposite extreme from sinfulness, but which presented the most stupid and stubborn resistance to His work of reconciliation. For this was the form in which He made known to men the secret of the universe : The Maker and Ruler of it was the Father from whom man (and men) had been separated, but to whom he was capable of being restored. Were man to change his mind about God, and trust in Him whom he thought of as afar off, and even regarded as an enemy, then this severed relation would be reëstablished, and a kingdom of heaven would arise among men. In this recovered harmony there would flow into the lives of the children of the kingdom all those streams of gracious favour which Jesus saw to proceed from the Father-God eternally. Then the very mourners over human wretchedness and sin should find complete comfort and be "blessed." The gentle and the clean of mind, the lovers of peace and the merciful—despised and lonely heretofore, offended and oppressed by the selfish tyranny of a perverted race,—they too would

be "blessed," in rich possessions and congenial fellowships, and in the undimmed vision of God. And those whose very devotion to justice and purity had made them the objects of men's scorn and cruelty would rejoice with great exultation in the splendid compensations of the new reign of peace.<sup>1</sup>

### GOD IN ALL THINGS

It was from this new standpoint alone that men could see and understand the completer teaching of Jesus, already alluded to, concerning God's relation to every detail of human experience and the whole process of human history. Even in that wide area of the human life—sombre and desolate and repulsive—where disease and pain, and mental obscuration and imbecility or turbulence and anarchy seem to hold evil sway,—even there God is, with power to assuage and correct, to heal and to make strong, and to give patience and quietness and hope. And in the region of moral disorder, where still more tragic

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 3-12.

wreckage strews the way of life, He still holds final sovereignty ; He is the Judge, pardoning and condemning, to whom alone belongs the power of life and death. So also in the realm of mutual human relations, God rules. There is no doubt but that Jesus proposed here a new view and one far simpler than any known political scheme or social classification allows. Friendship and mutual helpfulness—love and service—were the principles He urged, and which He would apply absolutely without regard to conventional distinctions or adventitious separations among men. The most alien peoples and the most bitter enemies He would bring under this rule. But His “works” rather than His words make clear His position which aimed not at violent revolution, but at the quiet working out of these principles of the kingdom in the midst of the artificial systems already established among men. What we have to take note of here especially is that Jesus by word and deed recognized the direct and immediate rule of God—the same personal Intelligence, whose apprehension gives meaning to the

physical universe, also reducing to order and simplicity all human confusion, if only His rule be known. His hand had been upon men through all the past. He was the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.<sup>1</sup> He had been at work throughout all the ages and to the present moment.<sup>2</sup> He was the Father who Himself had bestowed the largess of life and opportunity upon His child, and through the long, sad course of history had waited for His own fullness of joy while watching for the return of the "son that was lost." He had the future also in view; His hand was upon it. He would answer His children's prayers. He would speak through them. And, whether by power of cataclysmic revolution—as the use of Jewish apocalyptic speech seems, at first sight, to indicate;—or, in the way of orderly progress and development—as, on the whole, I am disposed to believe Jesus foresaw; in any case *His kingdom* was coming, and His servants would attain to the glory and joy of His perfect reign.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 17.

## JESUS' OWN PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

The more one reflects upon the life and work of Jesus the stronger will be his conviction that he cannot, with perfect fidelity to scientific truth, make short work of it and include the study of Jesus' relation to God, the world, mankind, under that of the relation of men in general to these various members of the universe. For instance there is the question of "sin," which has so radically affected other men, but which is never in the slightest degree discoverable in the consciousness of Jesus. He openly professes certain human limitations, but He never makes any acknowledgment of moral flaw; and His clear thinking and His intuitive certainty about God are never marred by the sense of guilt or moral failure or defection of any kind. There is never any semblance of compromise in His view of sin's hatefulness, though the pardon of those who have been ruined by its baleful corruption seems easy to His love;—a position which it is psychologically impossible for a conscious sinner to hold. Moreover, one is compelled to observe

the extraordinary manifestations of the "supernatural" at certain epochs in His career. Though Jesus' own disposition to ignore or repress all curious or superstitious appeal to the miraculous very distinctly appears, the nearness and reality of the "spirit world" is evinced by its repeated breaking through into the realm of sense. At the time of His baptism He beholds the heavens opened and hears the very voice of God. A little later, in the wilderness, after the victorious struggle with temptation "the angels came and ministered to Him."<sup>1</sup> And again in the very crisis of His life, when the signs of earthly failure were indubitably appearing on every hand, occurred the unparalleled event known as the "transfiguration," when, as He prayed, the current of His human course suddenly impinged upon and ran across the boundary of the heavenly world. On the one hand were the amazed disciples, on the other the visible forms of long gone

<sup>1</sup> Even though these words should be explained away as merely an ancient mode of speech, they must have stood for something very real and significant in the experience of Jesus.

Israelitish heroes, while between them appeared the figure of Jesus retaining its human identity but flashing with a brightness above that of the sun. These and other reasons inevitably require a separate consideration of Jesus' own relations in the universe.<sup>1</sup> Nor can the reader of the Gospels fail to be impressed with the view frequently expressed of Jesus' complete mastery over, or independence of, the forces of physical nature. Not only are many acts of healing to be mentioned here, but, above all, the accounts given, in the style and spirit of plain unexaggerated narrative, of His restoring the dead to life. In connection with this we also remember such deeds as His walking on the sea, and changing the water into wine, and

<sup>1</sup> It must, of course, be remembered that in these studies we are only seeking to put into intelligible forms of expression the human consciousness and life of Jesus. What I am saying is what I conceive any student of the sources who credits them with substantial truthfulness would be compelled to acknowledge, no matter what his theory might be concerning the historic doctrine of "the divinity of Jesus." I may add, however, that for myself, the implications involved in the results of our study do indubitably lead to the belief that Jesus was more and better and greater than any other man,—or than any other possible man who was not himself reincarnate.

multiplying the loaves and fishes, at all of which physical science scoffs in our day, but which cannot be removed from the historic record merely upon the arbitrary demand of that science whose own final position is that, with reference to the "super-physical" and the "divine," it simply does not and cannot, by its own methods, have any sure knowledge.

### HIS RELATION TO GOD

Jesus' use of the word Father as a descriptive title of God is subject to a subtle kind of inflection which may invariably be noticed as He passes back and forth in thought from Himself to others. He speaks of "My Father" and of "your Father," but never of "our Father" where He Himself is included under the plural pronoun. It is in His character as a worker, however, that we see most clearly exhibited Jesus' glad sense of personal nearness to God the Father. He seemed perfectly to know the mind of God on all matters of essential moral significance, and all matters of important human need. And He had such constant access to the Father

that sometimes He was overheard as if speaking to another,<sup>1</sup> and it was found that He was taking counsel with the "Lord of heaven and earth," who was there. An intimacy was thus revealed which told of other hours of communion and of sacred trysts of which even His closest friends had had no previous knowledge. Not even the Scriptures came between Jesus and God. His intercourse with the Father was utterly unmediated. The "Law" was the object of the reverence and study of the scribes and other Jewish leaders; but Jesus would set aside or emend the Law upon the authority of His own consciousness of God. His sense of dependence upon God, however, is very manifest. The Gospels make frequent note of His prayers, and wherever a word of them is given they breathe the spirit of complete trust, but also of loving submission. Special "seasons of prayer," sometimes continuing through a sleepless night, seem to be connected with important events or epochs in His ministry.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 25-26; John xi. 41, 42.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Mark i. 35; Luke vi. 12; ix. 18, 28; xxii. 41-44.

One may venture to surmise that much of His teaching concerning prayer was the reflection of His own experience. "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you," was a rule of gracious reciprocity between God and His child which had been demonstrated as true in His own life. "Pray to thy Father who is in secret and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee," was doubtless an original discovery of His own ; and as a result of it He sought utterly to disown all ostentatious forms of prayer, and all narrow notions concerning exclusive times and places for prayer. "Can one pray the Father in one's room ?" asked a Chinese teacher who had found two Christian women at their devotions in their study. "I am so glad," she said, "I thought one must go to the temple to pray to Him."<sup>1</sup> Thus is forever renewed the great liberation which the Master first wrought in the case of the astonished woman at Jacob's well.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Brockman, in *Go Forward* for Feb., 1909.

<sup>2</sup> John iv.

## GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE AMONG MEN

One of the marvels of Jesus' life was that the work which He steadily did among men was itself a new revelation of the character of God ; and He confidently undertook to do some things which, according to current belief, at least, only God could do. In all this He seemed to be the conscious representative of God, His work, as narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, speaking as plainly as His words found in the fourth Gospel : " My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me " ;<sup>1</sup> and, " If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." <sup>2</sup> As frequently noted, He went forth among men preaching to them, healing their sick of both physical and mental disease, arousing the dispirited and kindling new hope in their breasts, rebuking and condemning the proud and selfish and stubborn, and forgiving the sinner who had now become humble and teachable. He constantly offered Himself to men as their guide and Master and Saviour. He could calmly say : " Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, x. 37.

men";<sup>1</sup> "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me";<sup>2</sup> "I came to call sinners";<sup>3</sup> "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."<sup>4</sup> And, withal, Jesus was carrying forward a plan, which His works even more than His words disclose, of setting up in reality, and in a far higher significance, that which the best in Israel had long dreamed of and prayed for, a kingdom of heaven upon earth. It was not to be after the fashion of earthly kingdoms. He had settled that in the "Temptation" in the wilderness. "The kings of the Gentiles exercised lordship over them," but His was to be the kingdom of brotherhood and service; and He, their Lord, to whom the Father had assigned the kingdom, was among them as one that served.<sup>5</sup> Even to this day the earnest man, pondering the story of Jesus' life, must feel that His attitude towards men and His conduct in dealing with

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xi. 28, 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 13 and parallels.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xix. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii. 25-27.

them was like that which a good Father-God would exhibit were He to assume a human form. With reference to all the interests of that inner life where all men are essentially the same—in the region of moral need and moral possibility, of fear and trust, of aspiration and self-satisfaction, of despair and hope, of love and hate—here, Jesus was not only a messenger from God to show men the way ; He was in His own person a very gift of God. His strength and goodness, His calm and confident wisdom, and His sense of the abiding presence of Infinite Love, had the effect of bringing men up out of a very *sheol* of grovelling spiritual torment into a wondrous liberty of abounding life. What words can describe that driving away of smothering mists, that quieting of the turbulent spirit, that sudden access of power and possession, which comes to the life that had been irritated and mean and groping, with the presence of a sweet, sane, friendly personality, wide-visioned, protecting and strong. Then a worm becomes a redeemed spirit. And this Jesus was to men and women who received Him.

He was the breath of life. He was the light of a healing sun. He was the power and reality of the truth in a region that had been all confusion and lies.

### JESUS AND THE AFFAIRS OF THIS WORLD

But when we enter the region of those pursuits and interests which, as many think in our day, go to make up the sum and substance of life's whole—the region of buying and selling, of pushing ahead and engaging in rivalries, of the concerns of dress and food (beyond simple provision for health and comfort)—we are at first astonished, and some are offended, to perceive in Jesus either a cold lack of interest, or a feeling of aversion and of the apprehension of danger to men. This was, in His view, the wilderness zone, a region of weeds and noxious growths, or of barrenness and rocky unresponsiveness to life-producing energy and grace from God.<sup>1</sup> This was the desert and the place of wild beasts. We must not fail to remember, however, that it was only in so far as this

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xiii. 20-22.

wide realm might not be brought under the control of the cardinal principles of service and love that it was excluded from the sphere of His kingdom. Art and culture and even "business," elevated and purified under the gracious rule of these ennobling influences, are certainly among the "talents" which it is the mission of human life to multiply. But Jesus would not allow any intrusion of purpose or motive which was inconsistent with a faith which overruled the life in the direction of its spiritual interests, or with a dominant brotherliness which determined all possible human relationships.

### THE CONTRADICTIONS OF EXISTENCE

From the very beginning Jesus had encountered the antagonisms which human inertia seems to make inevitable, and human cross-purposes render complex and exceedingly difficult, for the man of high ideals. In this sphere Jesus was the Man of Action—the Worker—if need be, the aggressive Warrior, advancing to conquer the field.

And He would not for a single instant abate  
His expectancy of final victory.

But to every human soul there are times when the great World itself,—vast, vague, unescapable, seems to be one's antagonist. It is not all easy then even to the disciple of Jesus. The knowledge of God as Father does indeed diffuse a wondrous light from centre to circumference of the universe. Its grand movements, its controlling forces, its ultimate goal, do now appear comprehensible, and they vindicate themselves as good. But life's growing experiences sooner or later bring one again to the consciousness of mystery, and the apprehension of a force against which one wrestles in vain. There are regions of night notwithstanding the light of the world. There are places of terror notwithstanding the reign of love. Destiny seems as cruel as an earthquake, a winter's storm, a black plague. In its mood it crushes man's little hopes and plans as the falling giant of the forest crushes the tiny egg in the nest. The human soul is overborne—driven and caught in the glacial drift

of the dead, cold mass of *things*, and all that is left to it is submission. Jesus was not exempt from this experience of ineffectual struggle, and of the terror and inscrutable unyieldingness of the world. But though the mystery and inexorableness of it all forced a cry from those steadily brave lips—“My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death,”—He nevertheless won there, in Gethsemane, the victory of faith. Prayer rises to God above the storm’s loud roaring, through the wreck and ruin of the earthquake: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt.”

“In the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation.”

LECTURE IV  
THE CONSTRUCTIVE  
PURPOSE OF JESUS

"No other career ever had so much unity. . . . Men in general take up scheme after scheme. . . . But Christ formed one plan and executed it."—*Ecce Homo*.

"His method of fulfilling by ever deeper explanation rather than by destroying, will make him normative for the world till there is a higher and stronger faculty in the soul than love, a loftier object for it to cleave to than God, or a nobler object to serve than mankind."—*Dr. G. Stanley Hall*.

"The Kingdom . . .

Should clasp in one mild confine all those hearts  
Which seek and love the Light and had the Light  
Shining from secret Heaven, by Him revealed  
First-born of Heaven, first Soul of Human Souls  
That touched the top of Manhood and—from height  
Of godlike, pure Humanity—reached God.  
To this end was He sent, for this made known  
Life beyond death, Love manifest through Law,  
And God no name, no angry judge, no 'Jah'  
But Spirit, worshipped in the spirit: One  
With His sweet Spirit, and with ours, through His;  
Unseen, unspeakable, not to be known  
By searching; being beyond all sight, speech, search;  
But Lord and Lover of all living things,  
King of the Kingdom."

—*Edwin Arnold*.

## LECTURE IV

### THE CONSTRUCTIVE PURPOSE OF JESUS

WE have already taken note of the fact that one of the outstanding features of Jesus' life was His consciousness of a mission. But the varying expressions of His purpose which we find in the Gospels<sup>1</sup> lead us to look for some single general statement of the controlling object of His life's work in word or phrase of His own. And we do not have far to go. The subject of His preaching—namely, the *Kingdom of God*—was also the goal of all His striving. The pages of the Gospels are strewn thick with this phrase, which occurs

<sup>1</sup> "Come ye after Me and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark i. 17 and parallels). "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark ii. 17 and parallels). "The Son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45 and parallels). "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). See also John xviii. 37.

more than one hundred times in the Synoptics, almost invariably in the mouth of Jesus. He made it the theme of the daily prayers of His disciples—indeed it was the very first petition which they were commanded to offer; the Master knowing quite well that there was no more effective way than that of enlisting their hearts' best energies in its behalf.

#### VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF "THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Just what was intended by this phrase has been the subject of earnest study and of much varied speculation. All investigators have agreed as to the importance of the theme; and from various standpoints proposals have come for the recasting of theology or for an entirely new estimate of the life and work of Jesus in accord with the meaning—now determined, according to the writers—of these hitherto enigmatical words.

The difficulty of interpretation is due partly to the fact that this particular collocation of words has no present day significance; nor, until defined, does it seem to

correspond to any notion of current human interest. So, by the common reader, it is generally relegated to the glossary of obsolete theological terms when not superficially understood to refer to the place or state of "the saved" beyond death. But there is also the difficulty which arises from Jesus' own use of the phrase in quite different connotations; and the confusion of the modern mind is only the continuance of that which has obtained in the Church from the time of the Apostolic Fathers.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, especially since the growing influence of the Ritschlian school began to be felt, the discussion of the term and its implications has occupied a large space in our theological literature. In the immediate present a certain conception of its meaning is absorbing the almost exclusive attention of a very influential company of brilliant German writers.

There are at least three of the various in-

<sup>1</sup> See *The Kingdom of God in the Writings of the Fathers*, by Henry Martin Herrick, Ph. D. The University of Chicago Press, 1903. Also *Regnum Dei*; Bampton Lectures for 1901. Robertson.

terpretations of this dominating phrase of Jesus' speech upon which we are compelled to delay for a few moments' consideration.

### THE KINGDOM A VISIBLE EARTHLY ORGANIZATION

1. It has been given an *Institutional* significance as having earthly form and visible organization distinguished by well-known marks from the world in which it was established. This is the view held in the Roman Catholic Church which assumes to be the realization in concrete form of the idea of Jesus in the use of the expression. This conception has a less substantial basis in any sane exegesis of the New Testament teaching than any other which has ever gained wide currency among Christians.<sup>1</sup> But ever since the time of Augustine who attempted to describe and vindicate the whole Christian

<sup>1</sup> Only the single passage, Matt. xvi. 18, 19, can with any apparent reasonableness be cited as sustaining this view, and that only by a literalistic mode of interpretation by which it is impossible to render the thought of so marvellous a master of speech as Jesus.

Movement as a "City of God" in contrast with the "City of this World," and who represented it as a permanent divine institution having a wonderful story of achievement in the past and the certainty of universal dominion in the future, this notion, modified and narrowed by increasing bigotry, has been held in the Church of Rome. Others have varied it far enough to make it include "all branches" of the Church, or to make it equivalent to the Ideal Church. But, while it is very clear to all students of the subject that the true Church of Jesus Christ must as an institution be governed by the ideas and ideals summed up in Jesus' oft-used phrase, it is also perfectly manifest that the term, *Church*, in any known use of it, cannot be substituted for that phrase in the language of Jesus without, in many cases, reducing His grave and beautiful utterances to the level of the commonplace and absurd. How impossible it would be without profanity to replace "kingdom" by "church" in the prayer He gave His disciples. How sadly false it would be to suggest that the church was the realm

in which God's will was done on earth as it is done in heaven.

### A SCHEME OF SOCIALISM

2. The expression has in recent years been given a *Socialistic* interpretation. By a skillful collocation of certain passages from the Gospels a more or less plausible basis has been presented for the statement that Jesus' teaching was identical with the ruling ideals of modern socialism. "Jesus was the first Socialist," is the quite flamboyant utterance of some enthusiastic advocates who are more concerned about the effect of their declamation than about the verification of their "facts." It is only right to say, however, that many who hold this position are chiefly affected by a sympathetic recognition of Jesus' remarkable interest in humanity as such, and of His utter dissent from all those artificial arrangements which cleave men into factions and classes through pride and selfishness. But the socialism which considers moral and spiritual questions as secondary and consequential, and which proposes to

solve the problems, and to level all the grades, of humanity merely by the adoption of an economic scheme which denies individual rights in property and prohibits the accumulation of personal wealth, is very far from a clear understanding of Him who laid down the conditions of entrance into the kingdom as "repentance and belief in the Gospel of God,"<sup>1</sup> and who continually places His own emphasis upon qualities of heart and soul as essential to life and blessedness rather than upon matters of circumstance and condition.

### THE APOCALYPTIC VIEW

3. Another view of Jesus' meaning in the use of these words—a view radically affecting the entire interpretation of His life and teaching—is described as Eschatological or Apocalyptic.<sup>2</sup> This is the theory that Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> These uncomely epithets cannot be avoided in a discussion which presupposes some familiarity with the modern investigation of the sources of the life of Jesus. The word *eschatological*, as, of course, divinity students know, describes the subject matter of the theory as pertaining to the "last things"; and the word *apocalyptic* designates the style of the literature from which the theory is derived as that of symbolic revelation peculiar to certain writers of the time.

Himself, in harmony with the teaching of a certain school of His day, looked for a spectacular and supernaturalistic coming of the kingdom when the Son of Man Himself would appear in glory in the clouds of the heavens. The throne of Divine Judgment would be set up in the world and all earthly kingdoms would be condemned and would end in tumult and conflagration. Then would begin the peaceful reign of the kingdom of God.

With reference to this view it is to be said that much of Jesus' teaching certainly was expressed in the characteristic language of apocalyptic. There can scarcely be a doubt that He deliberately used the forms of current eschatological belief to convey a teaching of His own, and He did thus, intentionally and inevitably, direct the minds of His hearers to a future consummation. But that He looked for a literal fulfillment of Jewish eschatological predictions—for a catastrophe or series of catastrophes in which existing political institutions should be overturned, and even the material world transformed or

destroyed, and a supernatural and divine kingdom visibly imposed upon the new earth—cannot be established from the literature which furnishes direct and explicit evidence upon the subject. Such a fantastic theory is due, probably, to the overvaluation (as to its significance for the study of Jesus and His mission) of the so-called apocalyptic literature, covering about the period 200 B. C.—200 A. D., which has been made available for modern study by the researches of distinguished scholars in England and Germany. But, I think, the conservative student may wait without uneasiness for a more wisely proportionate estimate of the weight and worth of the evidence thus furnished. In the meantime one may venture to take note of certain reasons which seem to hold against the extreme position of those who impute to Jesus Himself an eschatological conception of His own mission and of the kingdom of God.

(a) THE THEORY TOO FANCIFUL.—In general this whole series of ideas seems too fanciful and grotesque to attribute to Jesus,

whose bent of mind was wholly ethical and practical, and whose religious life (so to speak of it) was so purely spiritual and not in any respect fanatical or spectacular.

(b) CONTRARY TO HIS PERSISTENT ATTITUDE.—Jesus' own view was partially revealed in His attitude towards the different groups of those who heard and were affected by His preaching. The inevitable effect of the announcement by a persuasive speaker—who was also a friend of the common people and a successful healer of disease—of the speedy, supernatural coming of a kingdom from heaven, would be the gathering of a multitude of wild and hysterical followers. This is the very result which we begin to apprehend at times as we follow the Gospel story. But Jesus deprecates every such consequence of His labours. He “goes to other towns”; He even forbids the proclamation abroad of His deeds of mercy, manifestly on this account. On the other hand no such final effect is made upon the imagination of those who followed Him to the end. If there were impulsive ebullitions of apocalyptic and cata-

clysmic zeal He rebuked and sought to suppress<sup>1</sup> them. If there were times when the disciples, confused and anxious, plied Him with vague questions concerning the coming of the kingdom, He quieted them by kindly warnings and urgent exhortations to watchfulness and fidelity, but assured them that, in the meaning which they attached to the term, not even He knew the time of the King's coming.

(c) CONTRADICTED BY HIS WORDS.— Again wherever we find Jesus' own views distinctly declared they were directly contradictory of these fantastic expectations. In answer to a question which explicitly contained the apocalyptic notion, He answered, "The kingdom of God does not come in visible form ; it is an inward kingdom."<sup>2</sup> He could not promise or assign positions of honour in an organized kingdom to friends, however close to Him they might be; He could only challenge them with the prospect of struggle and suffering.<sup>3</sup> And in contrast-

<sup>1</sup> See Luke ix. 54, 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 20-23.

ing His own with other kingdoms He depicted, not the supernatural glory of the one as over against the other, but the reversal of situations which were strictly earthly and social; and desiderated a revolution that was inward and spiritual: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them. . . . But ye shall not be so; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, when He puts the petition, "Thy kingdom come," in the daily prayer of His disciples, He adds what seems to be the explication of it—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The closer we come to an authoritative definition from His own lips the surer we are that He was not the victim of apocalyptic delusions concerning the speedy coming of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

(d) EXAMPLES WHICH EXPLAIN.—Once more, there are various instances of Jesus' use of apocalyptic language in such a

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 25-27. See parallels.

<sup>2</sup> See also Matt. xix. 12; xxi. 43; Mark xii. 34, where an eschatological meaning seems impossible.

context as throws much light upon His own mode of interpretation. For instance it was an item of eschatological prediction that Elijah should return to the earth and become the herald of the Messiah and His kingdom. This was a clear promise of their sacred books,<sup>1</sup> and much stress was laid upon it by the scribes. But Jesus said, "This promise is fulfilled in the work of John the Baptist. He is Elijah."<sup>2</sup> To Jesus these wonder-words found their fulfillment in the profounder meaning of human events such as came under every man's observation. So the style in which the story of the "temptations in the wilderness" is related (and, of course, only Jesus could have given it) illustrates His method to the same effect. The language is that of apocalyptic speech, but the facts were, of course, those of internal experience as all human temptations are. Another instance is seen in His response to His disciples upon the return of "the seventy," who rejoiced that they had been

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iv. 5. See also Deut. xviii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 14, and xvii. 10-13.

able in His name even to cure the demoniacs : “ I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven.”<sup>1</sup> If works of mercy and love such as these, and their results in comforted hearts and calmed minds—if this might be described as the lurid, meteor-like fall of the prince of evil from his supposed place of power in the heavens, then it is not necessary to labour the argument to show that the “ coming of the Son of Man in clouds with great power and glory ” might well mean the coming upon the lives of men of the spirit of love and hope and faith—the coming of the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> See Sanday’s *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, Chap. I, from which this paragraph is condensed.

One wonders if this peculiar use of apocalyptic language may not furnish the key to the very difficult passage found in Matt. xi. 12 (Luke xvi. 16), “ From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.” Is it not probable that Jesus meant by that to say: “ The coming of the kingdom, looked for by many as attended by violent conflict quickly ending in the complete overturning of the present earthly kingdoms, has already transpired. It is here in quietness and love, having been heralded by that unrecognized Elijah of whom I have just been speaking ”?

## (e) JESUS HIS OWN INTERPRETER.—

Finally, the view that He used the phrase, kingdom of God, only in one or the other of its then current meanings, fails to recognize Jesus' remarkable originality, and ignores the fruitful power of a great movement either to create its own vocabulary or to reform or revolutionize a language, at least within the sphere of its own needs. For instance the term *pragmatism* in our present use of it would scarcely be recognized as akin to the common word of the dictionary of a dozen years ago. A former secondary and peculiar meaning has suddenly been developed into a broader significance, and now furnishes the sole definition of the word. No one would venture to use it to-day to denote the quality of "officious meddlesomeness." Or, take the term, "Christian Science."—Imagine the literary and historical critic of the year 4000 A. D. attempting to give a scientific explanation of this phrase by a careful study of the words "Christian" and "Science" as found in the literary remains of the nineteenth century to which he had access. Probably

nothing could be more grotesque, from the standpoint of the present, than the theory which he would invent and defend. If, however, there were a continuous stream of literature flowing across the years directly from the sources of these movements, even allowing for varying interpretations and gradual change of view-point, the task of explaining the earliest terminology would be far simpler. And under such circumstances the significance which seems level to the common mind—savant and plain man alike, who have no special theory to advocate—is most likely to be very close to the truth. At any rate it would seem that arguments are very precarious, if not utterly valueless, which base the interpretation of Jesus' language upon a peculiar and, as we may call it, *sectarian usage* of His day which is not well supported otherwise by His teaching, nor in harmony with the historical development which followed it.

I have dwelt at such length upon the criticism of this so-called "Apocalyptic Theory" in order, if possible, to protect the

young student of divinity from the disconcerting alarm which he would be likely to suffer, when in his studies he first came upon some well wrought out exposition of it presented in all the plausibility which it can be made to assume. Implying, as it does, that the whole plan of Jesus' life and the meaning of all His teaching was determined by His belief that the end was at hand; that His view of the future was one which we now know was mistaken and are disposed to regard as absurd; that His words which seem to look forward to a long course of development in the coming of the kingdom do not really mean this but only sound as if they did; that His ethics was "end ethics" and not suited to the conditions and requirements of our own day,—it involves so radical a revision of the historical Jesus and His purpose that one can be justified in its acceptance only by complete conviction as to its truth.

### WHAT THEN IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

What really did Jesus mean by the words

so often on His lips? We should be very diffident in proposing an answer to a question concerning which there has been so great a variety of opinion, and about which there is more confusion of mind just now than formerly. But it would seem, as already intimated, that Jesus' meaning should lie upon the very surface of His speech,—not, it may be, in the first instance, but when His great utterances are compared and read in the light of His life itself. Surely it cannot be that the very key-word to all His teaching should be a perpetual enigma.

What *did* He mean? By these words Jesus meant to embody and more or less formally to define an ideal which may be described as *the Reign of God established among Men by the operation of the Two Great Laws of Love*, namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"; and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."<sup>1</sup> The kingdom was, therefore, in its external aspects, the *Rule*

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 29-31.

*of God.* In internal significance for man it was the operation in his soul of a principle of joyful outgoing serviceableness towards the God who was his Father and towards men whom God's fatherhood made his brothers. In this latter aspect it was *Life*; and Jesus repeatedly used, and allowed the use of, the word "life" as synonymous with the kingdom. He allowed the great summary of the law, just quoted, to go as a complete answer to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" adding, "This do, and thou shalt live."<sup>1</sup> And when He found one who had the insight to appreciate this mode of stating life's greatest principle, He said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup>

This was the kingdom whose principles He preached and whose certain coming He authoritatively announced. It was the nature of this kingdom, its essence as a spiritual reign of God, a life of love among men, which gave to the very parables which expounded it that cryptic character<sup>3</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 11.

Jesus alluded to when He interpreted the "parable of the sower" item for item in terms of spiritual experience, saying to the disciples, "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God."

### THE KINGDOM AND THE FATHERHOOD

Some reverent and earnest interpreters deny that the phrase, "kingdom of God" sets forth in any distinct way the conscious purpose of Jesus' life, or that it is of chief significance in His teaching. They prefer to make the doctrine of the *fatherhood of God* the key to all the rest. We have no reason for prolonged discussion with them, but it seems to be a strange mistake to imagine that the ideas, "kingdom of God" and "fatherhood of God" are distinct and incommensurable in the mind of Jesus. It is very clear that they are figurative expressions which set forth different but supplementary phases of the organized system of relationships which the Gospel is intended to establish between God and man, and between men and men. In the phrase "king-

dom of God" Jesus used a conception, familiar since the days of the prophets, lifting it to a loftier meaning, but setting forth the real ultimate, divine fulfillment of their hopes in the reign of righteousness and a genuine spiritual kingdom, affecting the personal and social and political life of every member and of the whole. He further explicated this conception, aiding the spiritualizing process, by pointing out that the relations of King and subjects were in fact those of Father and children,—and that therefore Love was the law of this kingdom, and Mercy and Pardon were its mode of rule, and the spirit which prevailed throughout its whole length and breadth was that of Grace.

### WHAT IS LOVE?

In establishing this kingdom the difficulty was to get men to believe in love at all. It was this which absorbed Jesus' time and energy in the earlier months of His ministry. He had to make men realize love. He had to show them how to love. What love meant for those whose lives were blighted by dis-

ease; what love could do for those whose character had broken down under sin; how love could sweep over the barriers which separate the despised and outcast and solitary from their fellow men—as the full tide sweeps across the sands and over the rocks until the little stagnant pool hidden behind them becomes a part of the great sea—this Jesus undertook to make clear not in words only but in deeds also. And answering the awakened soul's deep though unuttered question, *What is Love?* the great Master began to bring in the kingdom of heaven.

What is Love?—Love?—Love? Why *this* is love:—A traveller on a lonely way was set upon by bandits and was robbed and stripped and beaten and left half-dead beside the road. It happened that two officials of the established religion passed by the stricken traveller, but they hurried forward without stopping. Then there came a half-heathen man who seeing the bruised human heap huddled beside the road, went to him, and swiftly sought to revive him, and soothed his wounds with oil and dressed them; and took

him to an inn and cared for him, and paid the charges out of his own purse and promised to pay any other cost—and then went on. *That was Love.*

What is love, do you ask? Why, Love? *This is love* :—A woman, scarlet with nameless sin, heard one day a Teacher teaching. His words were full of friendliness, and even of hope for the lost. And so when she learned where He was to dine that day she followed Him to hear again those words and see if they were true. He was at the house of a Great Man, a religious leader of his community; but the woman, thinking only of the Teacher's friendliness, pushed in to where they reclined at table, and then could do nothing but weep while she poured upon the Teacher's soil-stained feet the perfumed oil which she had brought which was her only treasure. Her tears flowed swiftly, falling upon the feet she was anointing; and she loosed the tresses of her hair and wiped them. The Great Man was angry and contemptuous because the Teacher allowed an outcast woman thus to intrude and, without rebuke, to

take such liberties. But the Teacher—still so friendly—defended the woman. He told the Great Man of his own proud neglect of accustomed courtesies due to Him, his guest; but of the woman who had recognized His friendliness, He said—She has discovered the secret of love. And then in godlike majesty—for love is majestic and godlike—He forgave every sin that she had ever committed, and sent her away with her heart a very heaven of peace. This is love.

### LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Now, it was Jesus' purpose to establish among men this kingdom of love. He announced it as the fulfillment, in every jot and tittle, of the law and the prophets<sup>1</sup>—of the ideals and the promises of their sacred writings. He exhibited it in His own human conduct. So He went about eating with publicans and sinners, taking little children up in His arms and blessing them, giving men health in body and soul, calling about Him a company of teachable souls and ap-

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 16, 17; Matt. v. 17, 18; xxii. 36-40.

pointing them a wonderful life-task, saying, "Ye shall be fishers of men." He was laying the foundation of the kingdom of God. And whenever a single soul began to comprehend His mission as the Anointed of the Father-God Jesus rejoiced in the progress of His work.<sup>1</sup> There a stone was laid down. "Upon this I will build," He exultantly cried. This was the meaning of His life. For this He wrought and taught and suffered and died—love triumphing over opposition and desertion and disappointment and pain and death itself, as He carried out the purpose He had announced before to give His life a ransom for many. Surely love that lays down its life for a friend is love which no stupidity and hardness of heart can fail to understand.

#### THE FERTILITY OF THIS CONCEPTION OF THE KINGDOM

The working out of this great spiritual ideal in the practical life of men would doubtless involve the organization of new agencies and, of course, the revolution of existing institutions. It would take shape in the minds

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 16-18.

of zealous adherents in the form of cults and systems of doctrines. It would set free undeveloped and unsuspected energies of men to find expression in myriad activities,—charities, reforms and schemes of propagandism. The fecundity of a great thought, newly apprehended, is a phenomenon which continually commands the interest of the student of history; but *here* is the very Creative Principle of all personal life—individual, social, spiritual—come forth to brood again over the deep. Henceforth the world will teem with new life. This is *Palingenesia*—a new birth-time for humanity! No wonder that Jesus' pregnant phrase has meant so many things for so many men. It means all that they have thought and more. And the chief difficulty in its interpretation has arisen from the inability of zealous advocates to see how much it contained in addition to their own view. Jesus used it broadly, variously. But always it contained these elements: God was its ruler; men were its citizens; love was its law; and life was its expression and outcome.

## THE PRESENT KINGDOM

One aspect of it, appearing repeatedly in the teaching of Jesus, is that of a *kingdom already come*.<sup>1</sup> It *had* come in Jesus' own person and in His practice of its principles among men; in His announcement and exposition of its laws and in their appeal to all that was noble in men as well as to their deepest need. It had come in the new health and happiness of scores, perhaps hundreds, of lives. It had come—as the day comes in the dawn—to the awakening minds of many besides the Twelve, to whom His teaching was “with authority,” in whom the seed had been sown upon good ground, and who should “bear fruit, bringing forth thirty, sixty or a hundred fold.” In ethical significance and in individual lives the kingdom was already established among men; and to Jesus’ clear vision its glory was at hand—as the telescope brings near the stars. He bade men lift their lives at once to the plane of heavenly living.

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 15; Luke x. 9; xi. 20; xvi. 16; xvii. 21  
*et al.*

### ALSO A COMING KINGDOM

But there is no question that Jesus oftenest referred to the kingdom as *yet to come*. He made the coming kingdom the subject of the disciples' daily prayer. His own attitude was that of one who was looking for and planning for its coming. Some of His parables seem designed specially to point out the fact and the mode of its future coming. Indeed, under the conditions of time and of human limitations, it was inevitable that a kingdom of love, expressing itself in service, should require the progress of unfolding life for its complete development. And so we find that the germinating seed and the growing plant and the spreading leaven furnished the figures which Jesus preferred to use in describing its coming.

Now, the sense in which the kingdom was, and is, yet to come is that which, for various reasons, should attract the attention of the student and Christian worker. For it is here that the word broadens out into its proper significance which includes not only the relations of the

subjects to the King but also their relations to each other under the King. And this involves, of course, all those aspects of the life of the kingdom which may be described as *social*. The profound social purport of Jesus' teaching, made clear and imperative in its challenge by His own conduct, is yet to be fully apprehended by Christian men and women and even by their formally appointed teachers. Indeed one may say briefly that much of the widely prevailing unrest of our time is due to the world's slowly awakening consciousness of social needs which only Christian love can adequately provide for; and much of the current criticism of the Church is due to its failure to understand and exemplify those principles of social life which Jesus taught by word and deed. There are many, both in and out of the Church, who still think, or take it for granted without thinking, that Jesus' teaching was purely and even exclusively individualistic. The school of investigators who accept the apocalyptic interpretation of His teaching are, almost

of necessity, supporters of this view. "He had no prescience," they say, "of modern social problems; His ethics was 'end ethics.'" But it is difficult to regard with respect a conception so at variance with the plain meaning of His own words and with the outcome of His life. To love one's neighbour as oneself; to forgive until seventy times seven; to find greatness in service; to seek reconciliation with an estranged or offended fellow man as of more immediate importance than an act of religious worship;—these, for example, are principles of living which are individualistic only because the social is the combination of individual elements. And they are, furthermore, illustrations of that law of love and service which is so radical, and so irresistible in its reasonableness—and then so manifestly divine in its origin—that the souls of those who comprehend are filled with the sense of its magnitude, its invincibility and its certain coming. The old-time phrases then come easily to their lips: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"; "The kingdom of

this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

### THE SOCIAL BEARING

It is quite remarkable that the very utterances of Jesus which appear, at first sight, to be the most pointedly individualistic have a significant social bearing when understood. A certain man asks Him a question which seems to look only to "personal salvation": "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers: "Keep the Commandments," and very strikingly specifies those which control in social relations. When the questioner fails to apprehend the real spirit of these requirements, Jesus puts it to him sharply: "Sell all that thou hast and give it unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Then, come, follow Me." Thus He makes the recognition of social obligation the important prerequisite to fellowship with Himself, and suggests His own definition of life. Even the oft-repeated requirement "Deny thyself," has its real significance in the fact that it is a command to ignore one-

self as an individual in the interest of social well-being. Mankind is of higher importance and value than any man. And no man can reach his highest worth as an individual except in the subjection of himself to the interests of the kingdom.

This is in perfect accord with what we may call the *philosophy* of Jesus, which is only the name by which to describe that clear understanding of human nature and its needs, and that perfect comprehension of the fundamental principles of the moral life, which completely provided for all possible contingencies in the course of the developing life of man. And so, in present conditions of social perplexity and discontent, with an intensely quickened human ap-perception of every word or movement which appears to have any social value, the minds of many are excited as with the enthusiasm of a new discovery by the words and works of the "Son of Man" whose every utterance seems freighted with meaning and power splendidly adapted to present exigencies and the world's crying need. The kingdom is

*yet to come.*—But through the years, in progress towards universal freedom and worldwide announcement of its blessedness, *it is coming*—descending from God out of heaven.

### JESUS' FAR VISION

And Jesus foresaw its coming. He had the far outlook. Nothing so hopelessly shuts in life and dwarfs character as to have one's concern fixed only upon the things at hand; to heed only the vulgar, crying, open-mouthed appetites and passions of the flesh and of the passing moment. The ugly fledgling—all mouth and craw—aroused to activity only by what seems to promise something more to eat, is the figure of the lower man. The eagle, scanning the wide horizon, anon the sun in his eye, sweeping from mountain top to mountain top on calm pinion; able to go hungry; feeding the complaining young brood yonder under the brow of the cliff, with the hope that they will become eagles too,—this is the higher man's symbol. And Jesus saw *everything* in the perspective of humanity's final goal; in its

relation to the universe—all men, all time, the eternal God Himself. And He sought to give men this power of vision.

### THE KINGDOM BEYOND

This constant recognition of the infinite and eternal finds its special expression also in His great phrase, *the kingdom of God*; and gives it, as we are compelled to see, a true eschatological meaning. The kingdom Jesus is establishing here is a replica. It is to be the realm where God's will is done as it is already done "in heaven." This made its glory present to Him, and gave a meaning which He could use to much of the apocalyptic language of the time. In many an utterance of His there is a swift glance forward and upward,—sometimes as if staying His own human soul upon the realities which He there beheld; oftener directing the vision of His followers thitherward for their own encouragement. Yonder, "in Abraham's bosom," earthly sufferers may find recompense and consolation. There the faithful servant will enter into the joy of his lord;

and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And there all who have lovingly served their brethren, whom He tenderly called *His* brethren, will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. *That* is the original, the eternal kingdom. This earthly reproduction is the *becoming* kingdom of which that is the final goal.

### “AGELESS LIFE”

In a later generation than that of Jesus His followers adapted His language more and more to the understanding of men in a wider world than that of Palestine or even of dispersed Israel. And the author of that wonderful spiritual interpretation of Jesus' life which we call John's Gospel (and which most of us believe was written by John the Disciple) substituted for the eschatological use of the phrase “kingdom of God” that other expression of his, “eternal life.” This is now less liable to misinterpretation, and conveys, according to the evangelist, the real, essential meaning of Jesus. We, in our time, are en-

titled therefore to make the most of the implications of both expressions, which were doubtless used interchangeably by the Master Himself; and we are justified in resting our souls in that same hope that has comforted the hearts of men, now for these two thousand years. The kingdom to which we belong is the kingdom of the "ageless life." And though the materialistic spirit of our time may threaten to deprive us of our old-time confidence—of our childhood's faith in the heaven of the good with its sinlessness and its joy—the clear teaching of Jesus will restore it to us again when we really take our place as learners at His feet.

### "OTHER-WORLDLINESS"

There is in certain quarters a good deal of declamatory outcry against a "religion of other-worldliness," and against all emphasis upon that aspect of the Christian faith and life so described. There has been some reason for it in the association, sometimes observed, of a narrow and selfish individualism with that conception of the religious life

which makes it only a mode of "personal salvation." But we may be in danger of suffering from a contrary limitation. We may be held by the modern obsession which, regarding time as long, and human history as an aspect of an evolution proceeding through measureless æons, yields to the feeling that life's consequences are so distant and vague that they are not very important objects of concern, and loses all sense of the imminence of the kingdom, which our own life's "cataclysm" may bring like a flash of lightning at any moment. Or we may so completely identify ourselves with the interests and experiences of this earthly life that we come to fancy that it is here that, in the course of multiplying generations, human history is to be most completely wrought out and the highest human ideals attained. But we should not forget—what is the most obvious of all things, namely—that if there is a human destiny which *we* shall share, a perfect civilization which *we* shall enjoy; if any permanent achievements, of either individual or social value, in the working out of which and

the results of which, *we* shall have a part;—if there is any future for men in which we who live in this present incomplete and rudimentary condition shall have a place, then it must belong to *that kingdom of God* (or that portion of the kingdom) which lies beyond. And we must not fail to see that just what Jesus strove for—the doing of God's will in earth as in heaven—inevitably implied a movement and a work which, in its individual and social aspects would prepare men for “the Kingdom Beyond,” in which they should carry forward their own careers; while at the same time it would be bringing in the kingdom here on this lower plane, and more and more making the earth like heaven.

### THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

And now Jesus' life-purpose comes clear before us as we meditate upon the various phases of this great ideal kingdom which His own words express and His own works illuminate. That purpose was the *incarnation*—the earthly establishment—of this spiritual kingdom of heaven through the “regeneration” of men

and their obedience to the law of love and service. It also included the "saving" of these men as individuals to the inheritance of eternal life. This was His mission. This he made His disciples' mission, as He sent them out to be fishers of men. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," they heard Him say at the very end. This gave organic form to the movement. Out of it grew "the Church." In the light of it is revealed the mission of the Church, which is the union of souls of those who have found freedom and life in the Gospel under the leadership of the ever-living Christ; a union of affections and energies upon the one great object of the speedy bringing of all men under the reign of love into the kingdom of God.

The great Builder's plans, it may be, no single workman entirely comprehends; only the Architect knows. But each single worker's task, if rightly done, forwards the plan towards the day when He who Himself laid the foundation shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of, Grace, grace unto it; and even they who despised the day of small things

shall rejoice as He at last applies the plummet to show the building complete and perfect.

The cry has gone forth to hasten. It is as when harvest fields are white and ready for the reapers. The same voice—aye, the Same Voice—cries across the centuries to-day: “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest.” And the children of the King offer their daily prayers: “Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. THY KINGDOM COME.”

LECTURE V  
THE ETHICS OF JESUS

"Every Christian has a divine inspiration which dictates to him in all circumstances the right course of action, which inspiration is the passion of humanity raised to a high energy by contemplation of Christ's character."—*Ecce Homo.*

"In the conduct of life, habits count for more than maxims, because habit is a living maxim, become flesh and instinct. To reform one's maxims is nothing: it is but to change the title of the book. To learn new habits is everything, for it is to reach the substance of life. Life is but a tissue of habits."

—Amiel.

## LECTURE V

### THE ETHICS OF JESUS

THIS is in some respects the most important topic of our course:—thus far, at least, that in the practical life of the minister to-day ethical problems of the most intricate and delicate nature are coming up to be solved; and they demand not only the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, but the courage of the lion and the love of the redeemed human soul on the part of the moral leaders of the community.

#### JESUS AND THE PROBLEM OF RIGHT LIVING

The questions raised, some of them, excite doubts concerning long established customs and even the permanence of historic institutions, and threaten to bring recognized standards of propriety under suspicion and into

contempt. They are not to be answered out of hand, nor can text-books of "moral philosophy" be trusted always to furnish indubitable guidance through the labyrinth into which they lead. If ever a perfect touchstone of ethical testing were needed it is now.

Then there is still to be encountered the world-old problems created by the moral inconsistency of professedly religious persons. To quote once more from the Bampton Lectures for 1907,<sup>1</sup> "It cannot be questioned that the striking contrast between the lives of Christians and the rules which they profess to accept is the great religious difficulty of the present day." I venture again to insist upon the importance of our standpoint in these Lectures. I profoundly believe that in the life and conduct of Jesus is to be found the sanest, surest and probably the only finally trustworthy standard to which humanity in general will be able to resort for the determination of ever-recurring moral

<sup>1</sup> *The Reproach of the Gospel*, by the Rev. James H. F. Peile, M. A., p. 6.

questions and for personal guidance in individual moral perplexity. Neither the "character of Jesus," abstracted from the Gospel accounts and pictured forth in flawless perfection, nor His "teaching" gathered into a complete anthology of ethical maxims, can furnish more than a partial and one-sided exhibition of the complete ethical significance of His life. One needs to know the Man Himself, the Worker, as He stands living before one's eyes in the Gospel narratives; and to observe those more intimate and exquisite qualities, which almost defy exposition or even designation in words, which appear as elements in the blended beauty of His matchless personality. In Him there is opened before the mind of the student a radiant disclosure and exhibition of the secret of godly living, while His own exultant moral freedom tends perfectly to protect the learner from that narrowness and servility which mere submission to authority induces. And thus in Him will be made plain the road to truth and purity of doctrine, which is always more or less dependent on our attitude towards

problems of conduct, and indeed upon our solution of them.<sup>1</sup>

### THE AUTHORITATIVE TEACHER

In Jesus' life we have the magnificent achievement of perfect consistency all the way through between ideal and deed. He is therefore not only the model Teacher, He is also the model Man. No other in all the world's history has such right to speak with authority concerning either *doctrine* or *conduct* as He.

### RELIGION AND MORALS

The theme of His teaching, and that fullest illustrated by His career, is *Life*. The distinction between morality and religion was probably not made by Him at all in that form. Nevertheless, following modes of thought and expression peculiar to His own people—modes through which His originality blazed forth as the internal fires of a seemingly dead world might suddenly

<sup>1</sup> See again Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 21.

set it glowing like a sun,—He *did* sum up Life, as we have repeatedly noted, in the two great hemispheres—Love to God, and Love to Man. The “great commandment” is not one but two, He said ; and they stand each equal to the other in their significance for life. The one contains the sum and substance of *religion*, and the other is the ensphering principle of all *moral conduct*. And Jesus’ own unapproachable greatness is seen not alone in the exquisite discernment with which He detached these greatest utterances<sup>1</sup> from the whole of the Old Testament teaching, and then combined them into an all-embracing law of life, but also, and far more, in the fact that He Himself perfectly exemplified them in all the details of His own career and under every kind of test. And in the complete unification of these principles which His own life exhibited, all hurtful suggestion of duality was removed,—as if one could be moral without being religious, or could truly love God without loving man.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. vi. 4, 5; Lev. xix. 18.

## PERSONAL MORALITY

The intimate relation between these two ideas in the mind of Jesus gave to His ethical teaching that additional feature—that new depth—which the word *personal* attaches to it for us, and which is so variously illustrated in the group of sayings which we call the Sermon on the Mount. It is this quality of His moral teaching which some have mistakenly called individualistic, but which most students have recognized as giving it the character of a profound “inwardness,” which goes to the root of evil and injustice of every kind, and seeks to provide for social well-being by planting the motive of love in the soul of every member of human society.

## EXAMPLES OF HIS TEACHING

How penetrating His antithetic comment on the commandment which forbids murder.<sup>1</sup> It is *anger*, He says, that disturbs the peace of men and threatens the life of a brother. It is *this* therefore which merits condemna-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 21, 22.

tion, and which the new law of the kingdom prohibits.

How withering the righteous scorn with which, in less than a dozen words, He traces to the heart of flippant *unchastity*, casting its eyes about in prurient desire, all the malignant outcome of the most loathsome of social sins!<sup>1</sup>

His demand for truthfulness in act as well as in word, and especially in religious observances,<sup>2</sup> has moved honest souls ever since His day to emphasize the spiritual in religion rather than matters of form or appearance; and has appealed with double force against all *falseness* whatsoever, which is not to be tolerated even though it only appear incidentally in connection with what is otherwise good.

His injunction against *covetousness*, which is another chief source of social injustice and distress, is emphasized in many ways but in none more strikingly than by His own life of poverty and consecration to higher things. And criticism of “commer-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 2-5, 16.

cialism" and greed in our own day cannot be made more effectively than by simply presenting the teaching of Jesus as illustrated by His own life.

He understood and pointed out the ethical value of simplicity and directness of purpose. Though the activities of life may properly be very diverse, a *divided mind* actually shatters all worthy design; and Jesus was striking at the very root of this fatal *double-mindedness* in His ringing utterance, often quoted in an all too narrow application, when He said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."<sup>1</sup>

He was perhaps going still deeper into the secrets of the human soul—into a region which our modern psychology is almost disposed to claim as peculiarly its own by right of discovery—when He actually forbade that wasting internal friction of the soul upon itself which we call *anxiety*.<sup>2</sup> And He went on from that to forbid also that inflaming social friction which follows the assumption on the part of one or many of the functions of the judge in

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 25-34.

matters of moral import, and which encourages the swift development of the meanest of the petty vices by which society can be disturbed and brotherhood made impossible—that of *faultfinding*.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ETHICS OF SPEECH

I cannot pass from this part of our discussion without reference to Jesus' example in the use of speech and His teaching concerning it. I think that we preachers need to make special note of this, for it sometimes appears that we are in danger at this point of becoming the chief of sinners; and more than any others "by our words we shall be justified and by our words we shall be condemned." The gifts of speech are easy of abuse, and every avoidable abuse of words on the part of the preacher is sin. The talents for humorous speech and witty utterance, for the power to blast with sarcasm or to infuriate with epithets, open the way to temptation which we can hardly conceive of Jesus ever feeling. He could not have been

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 1-5.

liable, as some preachers are, to the dangers of over-fluency and bombast. But His custom of directness and sincerity, His use of "gracious words" which men heard so gladly, His mastery of metaphor without affectation and of hyperbole without the habit of exaggeration, His power to characterize evil in burning words but His great restraint in the use of them, His dignified silence when they haled Him before mocking tribunals which represented power but not justice—these qualities, in addition to His direct prohibition of idle speech<sup>1</sup> and over-emphatic<sup>2</sup> or railing<sup>3</sup> words, make Him the final and perfect authority on the ethics of speech to whom the preacher, of all men, should constantly resort and to whose rule he should be completely subject.

### SOCIAL ETHICS

We have already referred at some length to the social implications of Jesus' teaching, but it seems necessary to take up the topic again under our present theme, and espe-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 36.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 34-37.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 22.

cially to point to the fact that the study of the *personality* of Jesus furnishes a broader foundation for the rearing of any well-proportioned sociological structure than the *words* of Jesus. He was Himself, of course, a member of a family, acknowledging the significance of His relations to His mother and His brethren.<sup>1</sup> With the tenderest concern in His last hour on the cross He sought to provide for the comfort and protection of His mother<sup>2</sup> in a manner which showed how He trusted the principles of the kingdom which He had founded, by committing her to the care of one who was himself governed by love. He showed His appreciation of parental and filial relations and affections in many an act of kindness, healing the mother of His hostess in Capernaum,<sup>3</sup> curing sick children and restoring the dead in answer

<sup>1</sup> The occasion described in Matt. xii. 46–50, and the parallels, cannot be regarded as contradicting this. His words were a dignified refusal to allow family ties to interfere with His duty to that larger company of God's children to every one of whom He acknowledged relations and responsibilities so inviolable and sacred that to them also might be applied the endearing titles of the family circle.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 26, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Mark i. 30, 31.

to the appeals, or in pity of the grief and need, of parents and other loved ones. He rebuked the disciples who were lacking in sympathy with the pride and affection of the mothers who brought to Him their little children for His blessing. And by this and the whole tenor of His speech and conduct He redeemed childhood from insignificance. In addition He protected the integrity of the family life and the purity of the marriage relation by His prohibition of divorce. So He set the stamp of His own authentication and approval upon this foundation institution of civilized social life.

He also took note of wider relations, such as those of master and servant, employer and employed. Courts of justice, the authority of rulers and of military officials, the reality of national and race feeling, the attitude and the obligations of a subject people, were all matters of observation to Him, at least, and were constituent elements in the life of the people among whom He wrought to establish the kingdom of God. For evils connected with or growing out of

these conditions He proposed no specific remedies, and concerning the conditions themselves He had but little to say. When He said, "It shall not be so among you," following the statement that "the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them,"<sup>1</sup> it seems plain that it was not of governmental institutions that He was thinking, but of the spirit of pride and selfish arrogance in contrast with that of meekness and service such as He desired now in His own followers. The far-off final effect upon civil institutions of the operation of spiritual forces like these was part of the "leavening of the whole lump" which He anticipated, but which He was patient to wait for, and the progress of which He would not prevent by revolutionary predictions. For the most part political questions seemed insignificant to Him. He thought of men under the categories of the kingdom of heaven. They were "brothers" or "neighbours" or "friends." He recog-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 25-26.

nized, of course, the opposite relation of "enemies"; but the same law was to apply in one's attitude towards them and in dealing with them as with others. Love was the rule He enjoined for all. And of course it is easy to be seen that this injunction suggests the one radical cure in all the world for the whole list of evils which are of the nature of enmity. Just to love one's enemies would tend sooner or later to make them one's friends; and thus the conquests of the kingdom would go forward. But Jesus probably held no views which may be called political except as ethical principles enter into political ideas. He was neither monarchist nor anarchist nor democrat,<sup>1</sup> though He has been claimed as chief partisan for each of the three conceptions of government thus discriminated. The truth is that His ethical principles if bravely and consistently carried out would produce an ideal state under any form of government if forms of human government persisted beyond the coming of the reign of

<sup>1</sup> Compare *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, Shailer Mathews, Chap. V.

love. There could then be no caste spirit, no separation between classes and masses, no grinding poverty, no overswollen fortunes of the selfish rich. The rules of Jesus for the government of the members of the kingdom would bring about a perfect civilization.

Of course we know of the many denials of this view, and of the virulent criticisms of Jesus' own life and teaching which have ventured more and more into the light since the apotheosis of power and passion in Nietzsche's insane subjectivism failed to draw from heaven any thunderbolts of vengeance which those who echo his profaner utterances could understand. We need not be disconcerted by these eruptions of volcanic emotion which remind us of the unhappy man of Gerasa whose only glory was in his strength, who could rend asunder chains and break in pieces fetters and whom no man could tame; who cried out to Jesus, "What have I to do with Thee?"—but who was himself finally subdued under the calm love of the true "super-man," and was at length found sitting at His feet clothed and in his right mind.

We need not for a moment doubt that the calm and consistent exhibition of the spirit of love and service will be the sufficient power to exorcise the railing demoniacs of our own day. There is however a subtler form of the antipathy to the real ethics of Jesus against which the young student may need to be put on his guard, which assumes a philosophic mode of expression, and affects the mental attitude of the surgeon who is compelled ruthlessly to proceed with the duty of amputation, but truly rejoices in some prospect of the continuance of a maimed life if only the shock of operation be survived. You will doubtless hear frequent repetitions of the superior questions of Professor Foster—or others like them: “Are the precepts and practices of Jesus consistent with accredited modern ethical principles?” “Do the morally necessary cultural tasks of our time lie outside the horizon of His aims and thoughts?” “Would not the precepts and the universalizing of the standpoint of Jesus put all end to the state?” He also ventures to say without the interrogative

form: "Farming, trading, money-making—He [Jesus] said nothing which shows that He realized the dignity and value of these forms of life. He does not seem to have thought that the worth of a man depends, as a rule, upon the service which he renders society in such ways as these."<sup>1</sup> Utterances like these which seem to offer an affront to reverent Christians rather than to suggest further investigation, and which in this case are really the introduction to a rather patronizing commendatory statement of the underlying principles of Jesus' teaching, need not really disturb the peace of mind of the preacher of the Gospel or of any follower of Jesus. If this rhetorical daring of the critic be substituted by the daring of insight and faith the disciple of Jesus will still bravely uphold and defend the principles of life which seem as impracticable to many now as they did when Jesus propounded them. And it may appear that the testing of the morals of Jesus by the ethical theories which justify the main features of modern social and political conditions

<sup>1</sup> See *Finality of the Christian Religion*, pp. 452-457.

is, if not immoral like the opposition of the ancient Pharisees, at least stupid like the narrowness of the Christian "Judaizers." The view that the ethical teaching of Jesus is wrong or partial and incomplete because not harmonious with current theories may be of a piece with that which discredited them because they did not seem to agree with "the teaching of Moses" as interpreted in the first half of the first century.

An increasing number of earnest and scholarly Christian workers, aroused by the perception of unyielding difficulties in the present situation, and urged on by the protests of the victims of evil conditions, are convinced of the utter ineffectiveness of such "accredited modern ethical principles" as are out of harmony with the "precepts and practices of Jesus." Probably the most hopeful of all ethical tendencies in our day is that which shows itself in some form of demand for the literal practice of the principles of Jesus. Lessing's dictum that "the Christian religion has been tried for eighteen centuries, but the religion of Christ remains to be tried,"

is again quoted and applied specially to the ethics of Christianity. And there are brave souls who, possessed of prophetic vision and heroic spirit, are daring to attack with the plain, unvarnished ethical demands of Jesus, the sullen rigidity of "vested interests" themselves, maintaining their cruel grip upon all the forces of commercial life.

### BUSINESS ETHICS

This brings us to the consideration of the principles of Jesus as applied to those dominating activities of modern life described as "business." It has been remarked of the generally accepted rules of conduct of our day that they constitute "the ethics of a trader." And it is not an unreasonable criticism. What we call business integrity does not mean much more than strict observance of the letter of the civil law. The man of wealth who exacts the last odd cent due him, according to contract or according to market rates, from the overburdened labourer or from the poverty-stricken widow, is justified by the scrupulosity with which he pays the

odd cent due from him to another in any transaction of business.

The head of a large banking establishment, a most affectionate man in his family and delightful in all conventional social relations, said casually in a conversation with his pastor, "Business is essentially selfish." That such is the view prevailing in banking establishments was demonstrated when one morning the chief official of a rival bank walked into this gentleman's office with a company of associates and demanded his chair and the books of the concern. He had bought a majority of the stock over night. The presidents of the two banks were members and officers in the same church—which made no difference at all. The financiers of the community, except the personal friends of the deposed officials, were greatly amused at the *coup* of the purchasing bank. And nobody raised a question as to the moral quality of the proceedings at all. A standard such as this is easily degraded, as the many "investigations" of recent years in our own country show. Misuse of the power of capi-

tal in the control of corporation officials, and the collusion between overreaching business concerns and purchasable politicians and civil officials, have revealed a grade of corruption which is lower than pagan. But there are also an increasing number of noble exceptions to the general rule. There are men who consecrate all their energies to the task of managing their business in strict accord with the spirit and teaching of Jesus whom they acknowledge as their Lord. And there are a large number of persons who are inquiring, What *does* Jesus have to say, and what is the significance of His life, concerning the possession, pursuit and use of wealth?

### HIS EXAMPLE

Jesus was Himself a labourer with His hands previous to the time of His ministry. After that began He seems to have been dependent upon His friends for a home and for the necessities of life. "For your sakes He became poor" was urged in the generation succeeding Him as an appeal for the liberal benevolent use of their money on the part of

His followers. In addition, in our day it ought to be weighed by serious men as suggesting the view of life which *He* held whose influence and work have more powerfully and helpfully affected human welfare than those of any other. So far as His example goes the whole force of His authority is given against the considering of wealth as a proper goal of human endeavour, or its possession as a "blessing" of important value.

### THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH

His teaching furnishes us with abundant material for the further study of His views upon this subject, and immediately makes it clear that He was profoundly apprehensive of the hurtful effect of riches upon character. It seems to be this, rather than the social inequalities between rich and poor, which received the attention of Jesus. To Him poverty was no curse in itself; but the pleasures of riches were so deceitful, and led so certainly to selfish hardness and voluptuous idleness, that He could say, "Blessed are ye

poor, for yours is the kingdom,"<sup>1</sup> but, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> In our day the social reformer places the emphasis contrariwise to this. It is the need and squalor and ignorance and humble rank of the poor that are far oftener made the plea for a different adjustment of society. This may be partly due to the severer ills of poverty in our climate and under modern conditions than in Jerusalem and Syria in Jesus' day. But apart from this, it is more like Jesus to protest against the pride and recklessness of the rich, and the dissipation of their nobler personal powers, and the selfish misuse of wealth itself, than simply to commiserate the poor and urge their relief from privation. The latter seems to regard physical need and the external aspects of social subjugation as the evils chiefly needing to be remedied, while Jesus thought principally of the wholesome personal life and the moral character of men. The story of Lazarus and the rich man;<sup>3</sup> of the man who had large stores laid up and

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi. 19 ff.

who now proposed a life of pleasure for himself, whose moral stupidity God made the basis of His condemnation;<sup>1</sup> of the ruler whom He commanded to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, are all examples of the abundant teaching of Jesus in which He strongly set Himself against the dominance of wealth over life.

### MODIFYING FACTS

But we should not overlook any teaching or act which seems to qualify the severity of these utterances. In the first place the requirement of entire renunciation seems to have been applied generally to those whom Jesus called to be His personal followers and the companions of His ministry.<sup>2</sup> The importance of a radical and final choice in such cases was emphasized by extreme requirements which were sometimes expressed in other terms than those of sacrifice of riches, as when He said to one, "Let the dead bury

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 16-21.

<sup>2</sup> See *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, F. G. Peabody, New York, p. 210.

their dead, but go thou and preach."<sup>1</sup> Again, some of Jesus' friends must have been comparatively rich. The Bethany family, whom He loved and in whose house He was often a guest, were able to give Him a banquet upon one occasion; and one of the sisters lavished upon Him the contents of a flask of perfumed ointment which was estimated to be worth a sum equal to a year's wages of a labouring man. When the rich Zaccheus declared his purpose to be both honest and generous Jesus said to him, "To-day is salvation come to this house." Indeed, one of the twelve—Peter—seems to have retained some of his possessions, as he had a home in Capernaum and Jesus sometimes dwelt with him there.<sup>2</sup> So it is impossible to believe that Jesus taught that a life of poverty or mendicancy was required of His followers.

When we come to consider the subject in the light of the fundamental principles which we have so often noted—*love* and *service*—we are relieved of much of our perplexity. It is not venturing too far to say that if it

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 38 and parallels.

had appeared that the retaining of his riches would have been helpful to the character and efficiency of the young ruler there would have been no demand for their renunciation. Usefulness and genuineness were qualities necessary to life; and this "one good thing,"<sup>1</sup> which the questioner had desired to know, and Jesus now suggested, tested him at these very crucial points. Moreover, it is clear that in many instances the actual control of the life by the principles of Jesus' teaching would inevitably lead to the renunciation of wealth. If for instance it has been obtained through fraud or injustice, it must be restored, if possible, to those to whom it belonged. It should also of course be renounced by men whose devotion to a worthy life-work render it important for them to be free from the temptations and associations involved in the possession and management of wealth. Riches were in Jesus' view far subordinate to character and general human welfare; and usually they were a distinct menace to these superior interests.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 16.

But holding this in mind, and under the limitations always of His rules of love and service, it still appears that there is a place left in human life for the pursuit and the use of what men call wealth.

### PURSUIT OF WEALTH

Under these restrictions, which are never to be forgotten, the seeking of riches according to commonly recognized rules of energy, patience, economy and wise enterprise seems to be commended by the teaching of Jesus. In the parable of the pounds increase in proportion to wisdom and energy is the end desired; and in that of the talents increase in proportion to capital is expected and required. The two together enforce the double law of increase which must apply when one's "pounds" or "talents" are the riches entrusted to him, as when they are of some other nature. If it be inquired how the qualities of successful effort are to be maintained in the pursuit of wealth when the common motives of gain are forbidden, it may be answered that the application of the laws of the

kingdom will far more than compensate the world of enterprise by supplying new and worthier motives. Selfishness and greed will be nobly supplanted by passionate devotion to one's work for its own sake; and a glow and joy in labour and its results, like that of the artist or the patriot or the missionary, will become the crowning reward of all energy and pains in one's calling, however humble or exalted.

### THE USE OF WEALTH

The proper or improper use of wealth reaches backward in its influence and gives significance to the pursuit and ownership of it. Not, of course, that greed and dishonesty can be palliated or atoned for by the use of large sums amassed by such means in public enterprise or for "charity." But the only justification at all for the devotion of one's energies to the acquisition of wealth is to be found in the uses to which it may be put in the interests of the kingdom itself. And Jesus by word and deed does encourage benevolence, which is not indiscriminate giving,

but intelligent use of one's possessions for the relief of suffering and the promotion of the well-being of humanity. He thus Himself issued the charter for all the asylums for the afflicted and helpless that have ever been erected. Thus also by implication, and as an inevitable consequence of His life, is authorized the making and the using of money for education, for the promotion of art and culture; for religious enlightenment; for the evangelization of the world. Not only this but I believe it to be in harmony with the principles of Jesus' life to use one's wealth for the carrying forward of great enterprises of civilization which minister to the comfort and general well-being of the community. Railways, telegraph lines, trolley-cars, comfortable clothing, well-prepared food, good homes, books, magazines, musical instruments, beautiful pictures, are not only instruments or products of commercial enterprise. Some of them contribute to the health and happiness of mankind; some of them are the most efficient agents of civilization; some of them are important factors in bringing in the

kingdom. Thus in a thousand ways under the inspiration of Jesus' own life His followers may use their money in the furtherance of every good end of progress, and the increasing happiness and usefulness of men. And "business" will come to be done—not for money's sake—but for humanity's sake.

### THE ETHICAL IDEAL

After all, the crowning distinction of the moral teaching of Jesus—that teaching which His life enlarged as well as illustrated—was the *ideal* which held His own mind, and which He hung as a picture of luminescent beauty in the soul of every child of His. True to life and thinking about life always, His influence is like the awakening breath of spring on the world upon the character and purposes, upon the aims and thoughts of men. With Him, as already observed, morals and religion are but different phases of a life whose unity is so elemental that even to distinguish between the two in thought is to impoverish them both. The apprehension of the real teaching of Jesus

releases energies hitherto locked up, and excites an ardour in the soul which flames forth in the passion of a world-wide evangelism; or in deeds of heroic courage and endurance; or in the zeal and patience of the settlement-worker who labours at the task of lifting, enlightening and setting free the lives of the degraded and stupid victims of the slums, as though the whole task of redemption were hung upon the present hour, but also as if there were ten thousand years in which to complete it if they were needed. Indeed Jesus' ideal is more than a picture. It is a light in the soul shining through all the chambers of the imagination, purifying and vivifying and glorifying the whole being. Its comprehension is a revolutionary experience—a realization, like a birth to a complete new consciousness, of oneness with the universe and with God. Like the strange organizing power which adjusts the molecules to perfect lines of strength and beauty in the crystallization of dead and hitherto amorphous matter—its adoption would reduce all human relationships to a perfect order.

### DISTINGUISHED FROM LEGALISTIC MORALITY

The ethics of Jesus are thus principles of freedom, in striking contrast with the legalistic morality of the Pharisees.<sup>1</sup> To Him for instance Sabbath laws were chiefly if not only significant in so far as they were an expression of a profound human need.<sup>2</sup> Ceremonial ablutions were a mockery because they obscured the necessity of internal cleansing;<sup>3</sup> and fasting was only worthy when it was a sincere expression of the inner state of mind.<sup>4</sup>

### PRACTICAL AND REAL, NOT MERELY THEORETICAL

And yet one could not make a greater mistake than to allow the ethical life to become with him a mere matter of impressions and dreams. This is probably the "heresy" which most of all undermines Christian character and hurts Christian influence. There are many who nourish pious sentiments and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xii. 12; Mark ii. 27, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xi. 37-40 *et al.*

<sup>4</sup> Matt. ix. 14, 15.

admire the perfection of Christian ideals, and congratulate themselves on their perception even of the "beauty of holiness," while in business and society—in "the world as it is"—the laws of Jesus are dismissed as impracticable "counsels of perfection"; and the life is adjusted to the easier standard of more or less "accredited modern ethical principles."<sup>1</sup> To such persons the religious life is a mere matter of *words*—empty confessions and professions—words, and such shallow sentiments as mere words and play-acting for a while excite. And to them Jesus issued the ringing challenge and warning, "Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven."<sup>2</sup>

#### ITS SOURCE IN THE FILIAL RELATION TO GOD

And the Great Teacher never allowed the fact to be obscured that *His* Father was also the Father of men. The eternal source and

<sup>1</sup> See page 182.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vii. 22.

inspiration of lofty ethical ideals and noble deeds is in the consciousness of intimate relationship to the true God as His beloved child. Here religion and morality cease to be even diverse phases of life. Ethics is religion and religion is ethics. One can hardly tell in his own experience whether it is that Jesus "leads men through the demands of ethical justice and love to communion with God";<sup>1</sup> or whether it is through the revelation of man's oneness with the Father-God that his soul is charged with the passion of love for his brother.

#### ITS LAWS TO BE FOUND IN ACTUAL LIKENESS TO GOD

Whatever analysis we may finally make of our own consciousness the power and joy of living as Jesus lived is ultimately to be traced to the reality and the realization of the vital relation of men to God as Father; and that power and joy is there available for all. To mankind Jesus forever utters in deed and word the startling demand—"Ye therefore

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus Christ and the Civilization of To-day*, Leighton, p. 153.

shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." Undertake the impossible! Vanquish the invincible! Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors "that ye may be indeed the children of your Father."<sup>1</sup>

#### MAINTAINED BY A RULING MOTIVE

This is Ethics in order to Religion or Religion in order to Ethics, as you please; and both in order to life. It is not however merely a highly wrought emotional state. It may sometimes be consistent with an experience without emotions which can be weighed or recognized. It is a life maintained and disciplined by a ruling motive—single-eyed and determined. It is sometimes, therefore, the masterful holding of life in leash, sometimes its driving under a fiery lash, as well as sometimes the rest in fixed confidence in the gravity that holds life steadily in its orbit, and the momentum that urges it steadily towards its goal. Jesus' own unswerving pursuit of the end for which He came—through all moods, as we saw—

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 44-48.

calls all men evermore to the same persistent following of noble ends and fidelity to the highest ideal.—“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

### COMPLETE LOVING RECIPROCITY AMONG MEN

So there will be wrought out those miracles which are greater than opening blind eyes or strengthening palsied limbs<sup>1</sup>—the works of spiritual and moral redemption and re-organization among men, until brotherhood and peace and joy shall enable the members of the kingdom to realize that God’s will is done on earth as it is done in heaven. This is the life which, having its roots in the eternal ground of all things, and growing under the shining of the central sun of the universe, blossoms out into flowers and matures into fruits of loving service. There will be thus established the rule which men have long called “golden”—but which has been practiced with such chilly reserve under “the rule of gold”—the law of loving reciprocity and

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 12.

mutual service. Helpfulness will hush the cry of helplessness; the goodness of the great will make great those who had otherwise been small and insignificant; the first will be glad to be last in order that the last may be first; and first and last and great and small shall come from all quarters of the earth and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

### THE PERMANENCY AND FINALITY OF JESUS' ETHICS

My young brethren, I think that we may here safely say that we have reached finality. I do not approve of the dogmatic spirit. For the most part I am not willing to grant that any statement of religious truth is the last that can be given. But here the mind and soul find rest. We may—nay, we shall—go on coming to higher and higher appreciation of the meaning and beauty of the ideal here presented. But there is nothing beyond it.

It would require a long time for us who grope along these little earthly ways to journey to that point in the empyrean where we

could behold the full glory and the perfect greatness of the sun. But across the distance we can see it now. And we are held in place in the great universe by it. We feel its pull.—Some day, when the contrary forces are all relaxed and we at length are free to yield to His supernal gravity, we shall come to the place of perfect vision of the Sun of Righteousness. Meantime, with unveiled faces reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, may we be transformed into the same image even as by the Lord the Spirit.

LECTURE VI  
JESUS THE PREACHER

“The simplest sights we met—  
The Sower flinging seed on loam and rock ;  
The darnel in the wheat ; the mustard-tree  
That hath its seed so little, and its boughs  
Wide-spreading ; and the wandering sheep ; and nets  
Shot in the wimpled waters,—drawing forth  
Great fish and small :—these, and a hundred such,  
Seen by us daily, never seen aright,  
Were pictures for Him from the page of life,  
Teaching by parable.”

—*Sir Edwin Arnold.*

“Jesus Christ said great things so simply that it seems as though He had not thought them great; and yet so clearly that we can easily see what He thought of them.”—*Pascal.*

## LECTURE VI

### JESUS THE PREACHER

WE have come now to our final theme, the title of which I have chosen with some care. "*Jesus the Preacher*" seems to me properly to put in final phrase a summary of the life-work of the Son of Man. He *was* indeed a teacher, but His methods and His aims in speech were more often, and characteristically, those of the preacher. This is true according to either the ancient or the modern distinction between teaching and preaching. "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes,"—not as a professional teacher who elaborated what others had declared, but as one who made announcement of truth on his own account. He taught as a preacher. Of old, as in our day, the "teacher" must be careful of his authorities; he had regard to his system, or his "school"; he was

under obligation to be consistent or apparently consistent with himself. The preacher was one who had a special message like a herald. He emphasized it by various forms of statement and epigrammatic utterance, and explained and enforced it by illustration. He was free to use certain methods of the teacher if he chose, but his chief characteristic was his possession of an important message more or less startling and new, and his authority and power to declare it persuasively and convincingly.

#### ABOVE ALL A PREACHER

Jesus was, in the order of time, first a preacher and then a teacher of preachers, but no single word so fully sets forth the complete significance and effect of His ministry as the descriptive title *Preacher*. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel"<sup>1</sup> was His own way of announcing His vocation, as well as His relation to one of the greatest of the old-time preachers,

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 18; Isa. lxi. 1 f.

to His former neighbours and acquaintances. Mark gives the account of the beginning of His ministry by saying, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God." A little later we hear Jesus Himself saying, "I must preach the gospel of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent."<sup>1</sup> And His final charge to His disciples was, as the synoptics agree, "Go, preach." "As the Father had sent Him even so now sends He them."<sup>2</sup>

### THE GREATEST VOCATION

And this preaching is the divinest obligation laid upon man. As Dr. Hugh Black, on one occasion, said to a great university audience composed of everybody else but preachers, "Preaching is about the only thing worth doing at all."

The power of speech itself is godlike. It is the translation of the spiritual into the sensible. In speech the highest thought of your mind, or the holiest desire of your soul, becomes "sound," and is transmitted by air-

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 43.

<sup>2</sup> John xx. 21.

waves from you to your friend. You convey to him the state of your mind and soul, and by his response you may be made acquainted with the secrets of his heart. The gulf between soul and soul is bridged. Not only so, but speech is the actual vehicle of spiritual power and grace; and one may pour strength from his own soul along the channel of gracious words into the empty need of another life.

### WONDER-WORKING WORDS

What miracles are wrought by speech!— Some gloom has come into my life. I sit in my room despondent and cheerless. But a friend comes in whose heart is joyful and whose spirit is hopeful and brave. He sees my need. With well-considered tact he speaks a few words of sympathy. He seeks to present the brighter side. He shows the brave way of looking at difficulties. He suggests the reasons for hope. He infuses his own spirit into me. And ere he leaves, the cold, dark room is warm and bright with sunshine, and the sluggish blood now leaps

through my veins like the sap in the flowering aloe. The words of my friend were better than wine to my soul.

You may have some time watched the hard defiant face of one who sat uneasy in the congregation while the man of God "preached," as they call it. A little later you saw him startled as some barbed arrow, against which he had no shield, went home to his heart; and then his cheeks flushed with a sudden and novel sense of shame. His head bowed with humility as the speaker told of mercy and love and pardon; and then it was lifted and his eyes blazed with courage as he determined to risk all and give himself to God. At last you saw him when peace and strength rested in settled quietness upon his firm face; and you knew that the mystery and miracle of the new birth had been wrought in that life. What was the explanation of it all? Why, *preaching*;—*words* carrying the truth; words which, like those of Jesus, were spirit and were life.<sup>1</sup> For if words can convey truth and power

<sup>1</sup>John vi. 63.

from man to man they may also be the very vehicle of the spirit of God Himself—transmitting life from the Father of men to His children, becoming, as the great early preacher of Christianity said, “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

### THE AUTHORITATIVE PREACHING OF JESUS

This is what preaching is: it is the means of the transfusion of spirit. It is the announcement, upon the authority of personal knowledge, of *truth* that flashes like flame into the conscience and falls like light upon the germs of life within the soul. It is man ministering to the whole world’s need out of the truth of God and as the agent of His spirit. Nothing else so fully describes the work of the man Jesus from the time of His first announcement of the kingdom until the last word upon the cross. He was one who had been sent, He exultantly declared, “to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty

them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> And the power and charm with which He proceeded to show how the prophet's words were fulfilled in Him were such that all who heard "wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth."

### THE STYLE OF HIS PREACHING

It would be trivial for us to attempt a technical examination of the mere rhetoric of Jesus' speech. It is quite obvious, however, that the formulas of logic or of homiletic arrangement had no place in His method. His discourse was rich in metaphor, and he was unapproachable in the invention and use of the more developed similitude which we call the parable. His style was that of the preacher rather than of the teacher, though His unrivalled knowledge of human nature made Him very skillful in the use of certain principles now called pedagogical. But the mere giving of instruction in order to culture could never be mentioned as a primary aim in

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 18.

Jesus' life. What He chiefly set Himself to do was to reach the "hearts" of men. To arouse the conscience, to inspire a noble ambition, to invigorate the will, was His purpose. In a high and worthy sense Jesus spoke *for effect*, with a view to results in character and in society.

The arts of the writer are of course not to be looked for in what remains of His words. Moreover, even of His spoken discourse we have only what was remembered—doubtless only what could be most *easily* remembered by men who had no training in, nor appreciation of, forms of logical arrangement or systematic discourse. So in addition to words spoken in connection with memorable events, we have, for the most part, striking stories and epigrammatic utterances, solemn words of warning and sharp attack or answer in controversy. There would also be some passages which His disciples would deliberately commit to memory, as for instance what we call the Lord's Prayer; and some which individuals among them could never forget because of their personal intent and

application. What we have therefore of the words of Jesus become, by virtue of the very circumstances by which they have been transmitted to us, a special exemplification of those qualities of His style as a preacher which took hold of the mind of men and remained in their memory inerasable. The elements of Jesus' preaching, of supreme importance to preachers as such, are those which are inevitably preserved in the fragments of His teaching left upon record.

### HIS ARRESTING WORDS

He was master of the power of startling men, of arresting the attention, of setting the mind going upon trains of thought and inquiry. A paradox or an hyperbole, a challenge or a rebuke, an apt quotation or an historic allusion, or an ingenious turn of a Biblical phrase or a traditional expression, woven in with His fresh disclosures concerning God and Life, left His hearers tingling as with an electric shock, and sent some of them away muttering their discontent, while others said, "never man spake like this man."

He was a model in the art of condensation. He could sum up a world-wide problem and solve it in an apothegm: "*A house divided against itself shall fall*"; "*He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" He set forth truth in many a gem which shines "with purest ray serene" even at first sight of it, but which forever baffles the eye inviting further search as to its depths.

He knew how to turn to effect the simplest element of common experience or knowledge so as to give it that wide, universal significance which elevates the soul with the thought of kinship with God, and the divinity of common things: "*Whosoever receiveth a little child in My name receiveth Me . . . and Him that sent Me.*" His saying, "*The Sabbath was made for man,*" blows the breath of eternity through all worthy human institutions. He appealed as a Poet to the power of poetic appreciation in every soul. Flowers and birds, sunshine and rain, growing shrubs and ripening harvests, were made the flashing points where heaven touched earth and

the glory and grace of the divine fullness came pouring in upon the human need.

## TWO CHIEF QUALITIES

The *charm* of His speech is the element of His style most often noted in the Gospels themselves—that and His *authority*. Perhaps His manner in delivery was referred to, but there is a matchless persuasiveness in some of His words which lingers in such exquisite music and with such irresistible appeal that the listening soul even in this distant day yields submissively to their august gentleness: “*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*”—“*Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.*”

The power (both *εὐεργεία* and *δύναμις*) of His speech also remains a permanent element of it as men read or hear it to-day. His re-

iterated "*Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,*" rings with the tones of judgment in men's hearts to-day. And the words with which He closes the parable of the "rich fool" have power still to startle the hard hearts of the covetous: "*This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.*"

#### LITERARY ALLUSION AND QUOTATION

Jesus was acquainted with the great literature of His people. One might almost be justified in saying that He was a great reader. At any rate the poetry and "philosophy" of ancient Israel, the orations of her statesmen and preachers, and her history and the stories of her old time heroes, were well known by Him. He refers by name to Abraham and Moses, to David and Solomon, to Elijah and Isaiah, to Jonah and Daniel, and to others in less important ways. He quotes directly, and frequently with verbal exactness, from several of the books of the

Old Testament, especially from Deuteronomy and the Psalms, from Isaiah and Moses and from Malachi. And there are almost innumerable instances of the use of characteristic phrases and allusions to striking or well-known passages in various Old Testament books.<sup>1</sup> Thus He enriched His language, quickened the interest of His hearers, and connected His own teaching with the great stream of divine revelation descending to them out of the generations past.

### HIS THEMES

The topics of Jesus' preaching have been under discussion already in more than one of the preceding Lectures; but we cannot omit some reference to them here. It would be easy to dispose His themes under the three great heads—*God, Man, Life*. Most of the special students of the "Teaching of Jesus," whose volumes have come under my notice, have gathered His various utterances in groups under the headings of theology

<sup>1</sup> See *Jesus and the Prophets*, Macfarland, and *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and their Proverbs*, Part III, Chap. II, C. F. Kent.

or some other humanly elaborated system, ecclesiastical or philosophical; and have thus tried to make effective the "views" of Jesus for modern ends. Our aim is different if not higher. There is danger of losing sight of the Preacher while concentrating the attention upon a formal arrangement of His words. Our theme is not the preaching of Jesus, but "Jesus the Preacher"; and, after all, one cares more to be near His person than to be engaged in the construction of any *system* whatsoever.

From the standpoint of the practical aim of Jesus—which is that to which we have grown accustomed in these studies—His preaching is to be understood not as the discussion of a theme, but as an effort to win a soul. It was the casting of a net in order to catch men. His preaching ranged the whole field of religious knowledge and experience and conduct, but He was, in every word of it, seeking entrance into human hearts that He might enlighten and purify and redeem, and establish men together in the kingdom of love and peace.

## REALITY AND GOODNESS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

He made it therefore His task in preaching—

i. To produce a restful confidence in the nearness and goodness of the spirit world. Men were blind and deaf to the great realities. They were eating and drinking and buying and selling and marrying and giving in marriage. And these made up the principal sum of life. God was a God of the past, known in tradition ; or a God of the uncertain future, hoped for in fantastic dreams. But for the present the most obtrusive reality was the domination of Rome over the ancient land and people of God. And apart from the daily routine of existence the chief common interests were the irritating disputes of political factions and the dry-as-dust casuistries and controversies of religious schools. And while here and there rare souls hoped against hope in a God who loves mercy and not sacrifice and who pities all them that fear Him “like as a father pitieith his children,” for the most part, even

in the simpler life of the Galilean villages, they had "left the commandment of God" and "held fast the traditions of men."<sup>1</sup> They were shut out from all approach to a God of mercy and love by the impossible demands of an external "righteousness" which must first be met. The ills of poverty and the wide prevalence of incurable disease only accentuated the helplessness of this spiritual wretchedness.

To men and women in conditions like these Jesus came with His incomparable words of grace, declaring a message of gladness which would become real to them the very moment they accepted it. God ruled not only in some distant heaven but also here. His kingdom was "at hand." A peculiar happiness was to be the immediate portion of those who had been despised by the teachers of traditional religion—the meek, the mourner, the poor in spirit; and of those whose righteousness had been of the inner life and not of outward observance—the peacemakers, the merciful, the pure in heart.

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 8.

Over and over again He told them of the nearness and helpfulness of God, who heard their secret cry to Him in the private places of their own homes. There was no need for carking care and forebodings of ill.—“Your heavenly Father knoweth.” That should set them free for the life of the kingdom. But they were to ask the Father for what they needed. A good father loves to be asked for “good things.” So Jesus preached in the language of childhood—of the days when hopefulness and confidence are native to the soul. And as He preached He made it all still more real by His own deeds of god-like sympathy and helpfulness. Ah, it is a wondrous spring time in the soul, when the good news of God is so preached that men come to know that He is their Father, and they are His sons.

#### A HIGH VALUATION OF MEN

2. It was also His task to assert a high estimate of the value of men as such. This was an element in Jesus’ preaching which one misses from most of the preaching of

men both before and since His day. He had no doctrine of human worthlessness or of general "total depravity." He always had a hopeful word to say about those whom the world commonly regards as fallen beyond redemption ; and He compared them, to their credit, with the doctors of the law who passed judgment upon them. The truth is, there was never a teacher in all the world who set so high a value on naked humanity—on "lost" humanity—and on each individual man, as Jesus. And it was part of His mission to declare the infinite worth of a soul not only to itself but to the Father and to the kingdom. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." To the man in humble condition despised by his fellows, and to the man conscious of moral failure despising himself, the "beginning of the Gospel" which leads to repentance is the convincing assurance of actual worth in himself, and therefore of the possibility of redemption. And here, as always, Jesus' works give increased significance to His

words. The serving and helping and blessing of men was a passion with Him. He comforted them and healed them and taught them and pardoned them. He *believed* in men notwithstanding that "He knew what was in man." He knew that if they came to know God aright they would rise conquerors of their own weakness and the forces of evil surrounding them. "All things are possible to him that believeth" was a proverb which He uttered.

Not only as glad tidings to the lowly and the despairing, but as an important element of social ethics Jesus insisted upon a high valuation of man. Repeatedly He rebuked the leaders among the Jews because by their foolish regulations they not only set a mere institution—as their Sabbath—above a question of human welfare, but valued a single member of one of their flocks, or a beast of the stall, more highly than a man. But He Himself said, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!"<sup>1</sup> The whole of His great teaching concerning the love of one's neighbour, and even of his enemy, car-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 12. See also Luke xiii. 15, 16 and xiv. 5.

ries with it as a corollary this principle of the measureless worth of man. And so His preaching everywhere and always filled the mind of the disheartened with the bright prospect of recovery and complete redemption; and not only so but it laid upon the heart of the disciple the responsibility of exhibiting this high human esteem in his own conduct in order that all other men should come to recognize it and be blessed by it.

### THE OVERCOMING OF SIN

3. Another phase of the task which Jesus set Himself as a preacher was the overcoming and the destruction of sin. He did not enter into elaborate discussions of its nature. The method of "philosophy" may be legitimate for the teacher, but it is not well adapted to preaching. The statement of a formal theory of the "origin of evil" would be very unlike Jesus, as it would probably be very ineffectual in eradicating sin from the life of men, which Jesus was bent upon doing. He does trace sin to "the heart,"<sup>1</sup> however, in plain words

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 4; xv. 19, *et al.*

that pierce to the slumbering conscience of those who juggle with wordy formulas concerning what is right and what is wrong. But He is always dealing with it in concrete exhibitions of it, and after a method which only a brave and loving soul can follow—in a style which we would call “personal.” And so His preaching is severe or tender as the case seems to require, though the most noticeable feature of it all is His friendly attitude towards the sinners themselves. This was so conspicuous in His conduct as well as in His speech that it became the subject of bitter criticism.<sup>1</sup> Jesus warmly defended Himself declaring that His mission was specially to them as that of a physician to the sick; and showing in words of matchless beauty and tenderness that even one sinner—and that, one who had gone to the extremest limit of profligacy and disobedience—was regarded as of priceless worth by the Father and in the whole company of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus understood the effect upon life of unfavourable and unhappy surroundings. Ex-

<sup>1</sup> Luke v. 30; vii. 34; xv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

treme poverty, social ostracism, the shame that follows the public knowledge of certain forms of guilt, and the distress and distraction of mind which are the complex product of care and sickness and sin, and the depressing and altogether disheartening effect of certain forms of disease, Jesus recognized as ills which too heavily burdened the life of men, and which the principles of the kingdom of heaven should correct. He saw and gave full weight to all the truth there is in this modern talk of environment and heredity as cause and determinative condition of sin. The methods which He Himself pursued show that, in His view, the recovery of self-respect, the hope of worthy achievement, and the experiences of free and happy association with one's fellow men, and then the assurance of pardon—that this was the way of complete recovery from sin. There is no implication, of course, that the efficiency of divine pardon is limited by external conditions. But there is the constant recognition of the ill effect upon the moral and spiritual life in man of unwholesome and

unfriendly circumstances. The whole labour of Jesus to change and do away with unfavourable conditions is the answer to any captious suggestion that He "never held any such modern notions." He saw the whole wide-spread tragedy which sin had wrought among men and which then rewrought itself back into repeated and multiplied sin; and into the moral chaos of unjust and unhappy social conditions and over the ruin of individual character, which lay like rubbish neglected by men, He bravely announced the imminence of the kingdom of God. He had the song of salvation on His lips. He had the secret of redemption in His heart. He had come to save His people from their sins.

### THE PREACHING OF JUDGMENT

There was an obverse aspect of this Gospel which Jesus did not fail to present when necessity arose. The offer of grace to the penitent and trusting is at the same time the proclamation of condemnation to the stubborn and insincere. Jesus was the preacher of *judgment*, especially upon the acts and in-

fluences which tend to harden the human heart and stiffen life into mere conventionalism. Pride and luxury, bigotry and formalism in religion ; hypocrisy and inhospitality to truth, lack of charity and of the spirit of good-fellowship towards men simply as men, were the causes of His sorrowing regret and the objects of His strong denunciation. The pretentiousness of Pharisaism and the supercilious indifference of Sadduceeism were influences whose deadly nature He was compelled to point out and whose persistent advocates He at times branded with scathing reproach.

#### SUMMARY OF HIS THEMES

On the whole, however, His preaching was constructive and full of hope. The themes on which He dwelt chiefly and with unfailing enthusiasm, under the repeated announcement of the kingdom of God, were the Nearness and Love of God, the Redemptive Worth of Man, the Effective Pardon of Sin, the Splendid Discipline of Duty, and the Infinite Meaning of Life.

### THE PREACHER'S PERSONALITY

We pass again from the work back to the worker. The preacher's personality is of first importance. Before his message is himself. Under the circumstances of our present-day life the preacher's ability to present his message in arresting and winning modes of expression, important as it is, is nothing as compared with his moral fitness to deliver *such* a message as the Gospel of Christ with life-giving power. His own religious experience, his general education, his special training, and the discipline of actual labour, all have their chief value in the contribution which they make to the preacher's personal life, storing it with wealth and power which flash forth again like electrical discharges along the ways of speech. He must be fitted for leadership. In our day the preacher needs the breadth of culture and the tried composure which will hold him balanced and sane and patient in all the tumultuous flux of thought and energy peculiar to the time. He must be his own protector against fanaticism and the danger of prejudice. He must

not lose his head in passionate opposition to the “scientific method” nor in impulsive haste to take up with the latest fad of the so-called new learning.

### JESUS THE LEADER

Jesus was a born leader, to whom men easily turned for guidance. The personal memory of the author of the fourth Gospel seems specially to recall certain instances which exhibit this feature. At the wedding at Cana<sup>1</sup> in the very pinch of an awkward social situation His mother turned to Him, and He met the emergency. In Jerusalem the public teacher,<sup>2</sup> ashamed perhaps to go openly to this Galilean preacher, nevertheless sought Him out at night acknowledging His dignity and His divine endowments. But everywhere this quality shows itself. In the home of the unfriendly Pharisee, Simon, the calm superiority of Jesus became immediately apparent when the penitent woman broke into the conventional occasion with her grief and her love. He directed the

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 1 ff.

minds of the company away from what was merely captious or cruel by an inimitable mingling of loving tenderness for the despised woman and dignified rebuke for the proud Pharisee. "In the society in which men lose themselves Jesus asserted Himself. He was welcomed as one so frank and buoyant and wholesome as to be a companion for every one, but He remained as the real Master of the occasion, who had changed its character and made its mirth perpetual."<sup>1</sup> He had the courage and the tact and the versatility of the leader. He could face an unsympathetic crowd without embarrassment, and meet an unexpected situation with complete mastery. He could with ease and grace and without offense bid men to follow Him, and could daringly invite whole multitudes to rely upon Him for help. Upon occasion He could deal in frankest severity with one whom He tenderly loved. He could accept the title Rabbi and still be meek and lowly in heart. He could stand unabashed

<sup>1</sup> William Malcolm MacGregor, in *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, p. 118.

in the presence of great worldly authority and power, dealing with the representative of the Roman Emperor as with one for whose weakness He was profoundly considerate but for whose augustness He felt not the least awe.

He cared not for precedent or tradition. He was not the kind of leader which modern politicians desiderate—one who simply reads the signs of the times, one who possesses the gift of far-sightedness only sufficiently to discern the path in which they are going a single step further than the multitude who follow Him. Jesus broke the shell of custom. He announced a new policy for all mankind, not for the "chosen people" alone. He brought forth immortal truth from the tomb of stale formula. He showed men how to advance over difficulties that had hitherto been deemed invincible. He saw the ultimate goal of human hope and struggle, and fearlessly and relentlessly led men thitherward.

#### THE PREACHER'S INFLUENCE

The true preacher of the Gospel is one

from whom goes out a penetrating and subtly stimulating and healthful influence in the community in which he lives. Sometimes it affects a whole nation or an entire generation of people. It is something more than what is called "magnetism," and is not solely dependent on personal contact. Men and women who never heard or saw him are affected by his power. They are toned up to a higher life, and made more hopeful concerning their fellow men, and concerning their own destiny. Their hearts are warmed by a new, sweet sense of comradeship with the divine. This is a power that actually seems to be multiplied in its mysterious significance and its profound vitality by the passing away of him in whom it was made individual, and from whose personality it had its original emanation. It was once said of Robert Murray McCheyne, the Scottish hymn-writer and evangelist, by one in whose home he had visited, that not only while he was there but for many days after, the whole place seemed heavenlier than before. On everything, even the walls of the room where

he stayed, there seemed to be inscribed, "Holiness unto the Lord." Everybody knows how Spurgeon and Joseph Parker gave a certain character to London and created a moral atmosphere which more or less affected the general life of the city. And when they died the great city's grief told how deeply their helpful influence had touched thousands whom they never knew, and how their very going away had somehow produced a mighty *resurgence* of the vital power that had gone out from them to others. There is thus a faint parable of the "forty days" in every great preacher's career.

But what we wish to suggest is that in Jesus this gracious spiritual influence reached an altogether incomparable power. Men who dwelt in the warmth of it wished it to last forever. They were sometimes filled with an almost uncontrollable enthusiasm, and followed Him from place to place in their devotion. Even men of an alien race were affected by His gracious presence and reverently likened His spiritual authority to that of a commander over his soldiers. Multi-

tudes of people ran out of their way to see Him, and the crowds of visitors in the great city questioned eagerly about His coming and awaited it with palpitating hearts. And, looking towards the end, Jesus Himself said, according to the fourth Gospel, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." I cannot think that this was simply a prediction of natural historic consequences. It was the confident expression of that indwelling power which was a part of His mystic character as the Preacher of the Gospel of God.

### THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus' own figure both for Himself and His disciples was light.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that He said to the disciples, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your *good works*," etc. Thus is our general topic vindicated again. It is the life of the worker which shines. The preacher who preaches by holy character and noble deeds of service to mankind is light. And the world needs

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 12; Matt. v. 14.

this light. Men must be made to see how mercy and truth and honesty and courage and faith and obedience shine with glory; and how by contrast they also reveal the deformity and stain of every kind of sin.

When some unholy and dishonest scheme is suspected in political or commercial life, men cry in familiar phrase, "Turn on the light." Lord Macauley tells, upon a very interesting page<sup>1</sup> of his great History, of the first lighting of the streets of London by night in the last year of the reign of Charles II. Before this, he says, "When evening closed, the difficulty and danger of walking about London became serious indeed. The garret windows were opened and pails were emptied with little regard to those who were passing below. Falls, bruises, and broken bones were of constant occurrence. Thieves and robbers plied their trade with impunity," etc. No wonder that when an "ingenious projector" devised a plan for lighting these dark and dangerous ways, he was said to have wrought a

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, Vol. I, Chap. III.

"change which added as much to the happiness of the body of the people as revolutions of much greater fame." Jesus came into a world that loved darkness rather than light, driving to their hiding-places those whose deeds were evil, and filling the world with the gladness and beauty that lives in the light.

*He is the Light of the World.* What a wonder-worker is light! The beauty of the earth is not its own ; it is just the beauty of the light which it reflects. I look out of the windows upon the glory of this glad Southern spring and see

"the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new."

These lawns with their beds of flowers ravish the eye. It is God's light that clothes them. The green of these leaves and grass is not their own. They reflect the green of the sunlight, and absorb the other rays. The roses there reflect the red rays ; but the lily throws them all back and is white with the beauty of perfect light! A true figure. All the gentleness and patience, all the self-denial and per-

sistent goodness, all the purity and hope and faith and love in the whole world is but the reflection of His glory who went about preaching and who sealed His preaching with His own life.

My young fellow workmen: I remember that He said: “*Ye* are the light of the world”; “*Ye* shall be fishers of men”; “Go *ye* therefore, and make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the world.”

And I remember that He sent back a message long after to one of His preachers saying: “To the angel of the Church . . . write:

“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth: Behold *I* have set before *thee* an open door, which no man can shut.”





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